

**THE
MINOR PROPHETS.**

MICAH TO MALACHI.

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THE
MINOR PROPHETS,

TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW TEXT, AND A

COMMENTARY,

CRITICAL, PHILOLOGICAL, AND EXEGETICAL,

BY

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MICAH—MALACHI.

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INTRODUCTION.

According to the introductory statement, chapter i., v. 1, Micah was a native of Moresheth, which some take to be the same as Maresha, v. 15; but it is rather the town called Moresheth-Gath, v. 14, not far from the border of the country of the Philistines.

The time at which he flourished is stated in the introduction to have been that of the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; *i.e.*, somewhere between B.C. 757 and B.C. 699; in addition to which statement, we have a positive testimony to his having prophesied in the days of Hezekiah, Jer. xxvi., v. 18, where chapter i., v. 12, is verbally quoted. He must, therefore, have been a contemporary of Isaiah and Hosea, and is not to be confounded with Micaiah the son of Imlah, I Kings, xxii., v. 8, who flourished upwards of a hundred years before the reign of Jotham.

Hartmann, Eichhorn and others would refer the period of his ministry to the reign of Manasseh, but their hypothesis is justly rejected by Knobel and others on the ground that all the circumstances brought to view in his prophecies, perfectly harmonize with the state of things in the days of the kings whose names are here specified. The unrestrained licence given to idolatry in the reign of Ahaz, will sufficiently account for the numerous gross and crying evils for which Micah reproves them, without our having recourse to the atrocities perpetrated in that of Manasseh. It is true, Hezekiah issued orders that idolatry should be put down, and the worship of the true God re-established; but there is no reason to believe that the reformation was carried out to the full extent of his wishes. The relations also of the Hebrews to the powerful empires of Assyria and Egypt are in exact accordance with the history of the same times.

The prophecies of Micah are directed partly against Judah, and partly against Israel; but by far the greater number are of the former description. His style is concise, yet perspicuous, nervous, vehement, and energetic; and, in many instances, equals that of Isaiah in boldness and sublimity. He is rich and beautiful in the varied use of tropical language; indulges in paronomasias; preserves a pure and classical diction; is regular in the formation of his parallelisms; and exhibits a roundness in the construction of his periods which is not surpassed by his more celebrated contemporary. Both in administering threatenings and communicating promises, he evinces great tenderness, and shows that his mind was deeply affected by the subjects of which he treats. In

his appeals he is lofty and energetic. His description of the character of the Almighty, chapter vii., vv. 18-20, is unrivalled by any contained elsewhere in Scripture.

Several prophecies in Micah and Isaiah are remarkably parallel with each other; and there is frequently an identity of expression, which can only be fairly accounted for on the ground of their having been contemporaneous writers, who were not strangers to each other's prophecies, and their having, in a great measure, had the same subjects for the themes of their ministry.

The book may be divided into two parts: the first consisting of chapters i.-v.; and the second, the two remaining chapters, which are more general and didactic in their character.

MICAH.

CHAPTER I.

1. The word of the Lord which was communicated to Micah, the Morashthite, in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.
2. Hear, all ye people !
Attend, O earth ! and its fulness !
And let the Lord God be witness against you,
The Lord from His holy Temple.
3. For, behold ! the Lord is coming forth from His place ;
He will descend, and tread upon the heights of the earth.
4. The mountains shall be molten under Him,
And the valleys shall cleave asunder,

2.—It is not a little remarkable, that Micah should adopt as the first sentence of his prophecy, that with which his namesake concluded his denouncement against Ahab, I Kings, xxii., v. 28. Hengstenberg is of opinion that he quoted the words designedly, in order to show that his prophetic agency was to be considered as a continuation of that of his predecessor, who was so zealous for God, and that he had more in common with him than the bare name. עַמִּים *peoples*, and אֶרֶץ *earth*, are by many confined to the *tribes* and *land* of the Hebrews ; but the sublimity of the style, and the parallel passages, Deut. xxxii., v. 1, and Is. i., v. 2, induce to the conclusion that the prophet had all the inhabitants of the globe in his eye. Thus Ewald.—בָּלֶם, *all of them*, is an instance of irregular construction, in which the third person is put for the second, בָּלֶם, *all of you*.

3, 4.—These verses are explanatory of that which precedes them, and set forth, in highly figurative language, the course of the Divine judgment, and the tremendous consequences that would follow. The terrible majesty and resistless power of the Almighty are expressed in

- Like wax before the fire,
 Like water poured down a precipice.
5. By the transgression of Jacob is all this,
 And by the sin of the house of Israel.
 What is the transgression of Jacob?
 Is it not Samaria?
 And what are the high places of Judah?
 Are they not Jerusalem?
6. Therefore I will make Samaria a heap in the field,
 The plantations of a vineyard;
 I will hurl her stones into the valley,
 And lay bare her foundations.
7. All her images shall be broken to pieces,

images chiefly borrowed from earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. For a striking image of the same nature, see Jer. l., vv. 25-26, which cannot properly be explained, except on the principle of reference to a volcano. That of *wax*, occurs Ps. lxxviii., v. 3, xcvi., v. 5. מוֹרֵר a descent or precipice, from יָרַד, to go or come down. The events referred to were the destruction of the kingdom of Israel by Shalmaneser, and the invasion of Judah by the armies of Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar, by the latter of whom they were carried away captive.

5.—Jacob and Israel are applied to both kingdoms in common, and are merely used as synonyms for the sake of variety. The *high places of Judah*, were the elevated spots on mountains and hills on which altars were erected for unlawful, and very often for idolatrous sacrifices. See I Kings xii., v. 3, xiv., v. 4; Ezek. vi., v. 6. That these existed in Jerusalem, see Jer. xxxii., v. 35; and for the length to which the practice was carried in the time of Ahaz, see II Kings, xvi., v. 4. For בְּמִוֹת the Targum reads חַטֹּאת, what is the *sin* of Judah?

6.—Both in this and the preceding verse, Samaria is taken up first, because its destruction was to precede that of Jerusalem. So complete should be the overthrow of the northern capital, that its site would resemble a heap of stones or rubbish that had been gathered out of a field. Vineyards were most commonly planted on the south sides of hills or mountains, on account of their exposure to the sun; and in all probability that of Samaria had been appropriated to this purpose before it was purchased by Omri. I Kings, xvi., v. 24.

Images.—Or *idols*, whether carved, graven, or molten, which were erected in the temples, for the purpose of receiving religious adoration. אֱתָנִים, properly means the *wages* or *reward of prostitution*; the word is here, as elsewhere, employed in application to idolatry viewed as spiritual adultery or fornication. עֲצָבִים is synonymous with פְּסִלִים; only Hitzig thinks, that a more costly kind of idols is meant by the term, such as were made of silver, and were of sufficient value to be carried away as spoil.

- All her rewards shall be burnt with fire,
 And all her idols will I lay waste:
 For from the reward of a harlot she collected
 them,
 And to the reward of a harlot they shall return.
8. Therefore will I wail and howl;
 I will go stripped and naked;
 I will set up a wailing like the jackals,
 And a mourning like the female ostrich.
9. For her wounds are desperate;
 Surely it hath come to Judah;
 He reacheth to the gate of my people,
 Even to Jerusalem.
10. Tell it not in Gath;
 Weep not in Acco:
 At Beth-Aphrah roll thyself in the dust.
11. Pass on, inhabitress of Shaphir, naked and
 ashamed;
 Go not forth to wail, inhabitress of Zaanan;
 Beth-ezel will take from you its support.
12. Surely the inhabitress of Maroth pineth for her
 goods,

10.—Comp. II Sam. i., v. 20. The Philistines would hail with joy tidings of any disaster that might befall the Hebrews, and especially that occasioned by the Assyrian attack. Deeply, therefore, as the Jews might be afflicted, they are cautioned by Micah not to give such public expression of their grief as would reach the ears of their natural enemies, but to repair to Beth-Aphrah, a city in the tribe of Benjamin, and there deplore in secret the calamity which had overtaken the land. **בֶּגֶד**, a contraction of **בְּעֵצָה**. So Hitzig and Ewald. See also Gesenius (*Lex. sub. voc. עֵצָה*). *Acco*, i.e., Ptolemais, a maritime city in the tribe of Asher; they, however, never took possession of it, Jud. i., v. 31, and its inhabitants are, therefore, appositely classed along with those of Gath, as taking pleasure in the reverses of the Israelites.

11.—*Shaphir*.—Hitzig and Ewald think that *Shamir* is meant, which is enumerated among the cities of Judah, Josh. xv., v. 48.—*Zaanan*.—In all probability *Zenan*, a city in the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv., v. 37.—*Beth-ezel*.—In all probability *Azel*, Zech. xiv., v. 5, but where the town so called was situated, we are not informed. To judge from the connection, it must have been in the vicinity of Shaphir and Zaanan.

12.—Of *Maroth* we have nowhere any account.—*Pineth for her goods*.—The inhabitants were pained or grieved on account of the pro-

Because evil hath come down from the Lord
To the gate of Jerusalem.

13. Bind the chariot to the swift steed,
O inhabitress of Lachish!
(She was the beginning of sin to Zion's daughter)
Surely in thee were found the crimes of Israel.

14. Therefore thou shalt give presents to Moresheth-
Gath;

The houses of Achzib shall prove false to the
kings of Israel.

15. Farther, I will bring the possessor unto thee,

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perty of which they had been robbed by the enemy. So Rosenmüller and Gesenius.

13.—Lachish appears to have formed the link of idolatry between Israel and Judah. Lying on the frontier of the former kingdom, she was the first city in Judah that was led away by the sin of Jeroboam, and from her the infection spread, till at length it reached Jerusalem itself. In the prospect of a sudden attack, it behoved the inhabitants to use all despatch in removing their families, and what property they could take with them, to a distance. Lachish was besieged by Sennacherib before the threatened attack on Jerusalem, II Kings, xviii., v. 14.

14.—*Presents*.—To the Philistines of that country, for safety and protection. לָשׁ is equivalent in this connection to מֹרֶשֶׁת.—*Moresheth*, the birthplace of Micah (see Preface) is here said to belong to *Gath*, most probably because it was in its vicinity, and under its jurisdiction, when in possession of the Philistines.—*Achzib*.—There were two cities of this name, one on the sea-coast between Acco and Tyre, and the other in the tribe of Judah, between Kailah and Maresha, Josh. xv., v. 44. That the latter is here intended, is evident from the connection; for though, at first view, the mention of the *kings of Israel* might lead us to suppose that a city bordering on the northern kingdom is meant, yet the fact that Israel is sometimes put for the whole people of the Hebrews, and sometimes even for the kingdom of Judah, as II Chron. xxviii., v. 19, proves, that the mere use of the term can form no objection to this construction of the passage. It was most probably the same place that is called אֲחִזַּיב, Gen. xxxviii., v. 5.

15.—*Maresha*.—In the plains of Judah, Josh. xv., v. 44. It was fortified by Rehoboam, II Chron. xi., v. 8, and was famous for the victory obtained over the Ethiopians by Asa, II Chron. xiv., vv. 9-10.—The *possessor* here predicted is Sennacherib, who took Maresha and the other fortified cities of Judah, II Kings xviii., v. 14. To point him out with greater emphasis the article is used: הַיֹּשֵׁב, "The possessor."—*Adullam*.—Another city of Judah in the same direction, and near the former, Josh. xv., v. 35. It was a royal residence in the time of the Canaanites, Josh. xii., v. 15: fortified by Rehoboam, II Chron. xi., v. 7; and had villages dependent upon it, Neh. xi., v. 30.

- O inhabitress of Maresha!  
 He shall come to Adullam, the glory of Israel.
16. Make bald thy head, and shave it,  
 Because of thy darling children;  
 Enlarge thy baldness like that of the eagle,  
 For they are gone into captivity from thee.

## CHAPTER II.

1. Woe to those who devise wickedness,  
 And fabricate evil upon their beds;  
 In the morning light they effect it,  
 Because it is in the power of their hand.
2. They covet fields, and take them by force,  
 And houses, and take them by force;  
 They oppress a man and his household,  
 A man and his possession.
3. Wherefore thus saith the Lord:  
 Behold! Against this family do I devise evil,  
 From which ye shall not withdraw your necks,  
 Neither shall ye walk haughtily;  
 For it shall be an evil time.
4. In that day one shall sing a ditty respecting you,

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16.—Baldness, and cutting off the hair, are tokens of mourning in the East, as they were among the nations of antiquity. See Ezra ix., v. 3; Job. i., v. 20; Jer. vii., v. 21; xvi., v. 6; xlviii., v. 37.—*The eagle*.—One species of eagle is called the *bald eagle*, from the circumstance of its having its head almost entirely bald; but they all more or less exhibit baldness during the moulting season.

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1.—In the verbs חָשַׁב, פָּעַל and עָשָׂה, is evidently a gradation. The first describes the conception of the evil purpose in the mind; the second, the preparation or maturing of the scheme; and the third, the carrying of it into effect.

3.—*Walk haughtily*.—The term רַמְּמָה is selected with special reference to the elated and haughty manner in which they had conducted themselves. It is properly a substantive, from רָם *to be high*, but is here used adverbially.

4.—*Sing a ditty*.—That this קִינָה was to be employed by the Jews themselves, and not by their enemies, is evident from its tenor, as it

- And employ a doleful lamentation,  
 And say: We are utterly destroyed.  
 He hath changed the portions of my people,  
 How hath He withdrawn it from me!  
 To an apostate he hath divided our fields!
5. Therefore thou shalt have none  
 To cast a line by lot,  
 In the congregation of the Lord.
6. Prophecy not, ye that prophesy!  
 They shall not prophesy to these;  
 Their disgrace shall not be removed.
7. What language, O house of Jacob!  
 Is the Lord prone to anger?  
 Are these His operations?  
 Do not my words benefit him that walketh up-  
 rightly?

follows in the verse. עֲלֵיכֶם, therefore, is not to be rendered *against you*, but on *your account*.—An *Apostate*.—שׁוֹבֵב is a verbal noun, from the Pilel of שׁוּב, *to turn, turn back*; here used in a bad sense, one who has turned back or away from God; *apostate, rebel, idolater*.

5.—*Therefore*.—A repetition of that used at the beginning of verse 3, and for the same purpose. According to Hitzig the words are addressed by the ungodly Jews to Micah himself, and intimate that they would put him and his family to death for prophesying against them.

6.—*Prophecy not*.—This is the language of the rebellious nation, and immediately follows the divine declaration that it should be as they desired. They should be judicially abandoned to their own ways; and as they would not hearken to the prophets when they predicted evil, they should be deprived of their ministry altogether, and not receive from them any predictions of good.—I am, however, of opinion that we have here a defective text.

7.—The prophet here boldly asks, Whether the judgments denounced were operations in which God delighted, and were not rather procured by the wickedness of those on whom they were to be inflicted? And whether it was not a fact which experience had ever verified, that the Divine communications were productive of good to men of sincere and consistent piety?—In הַיִּשָּׁר הוֹלֵךְ, the substantive, which is used adverbially, is placed first, for the sake of emphasis, and on this account also it takes the article, which properly belongs to הוֹלֵךְ. A similar instance of transposition occurs in יִקַּר הוֹלֵךְ, Job xxxi. v. 26, where the substantive is likewise used adverbially.

8. But of old my people hath risen up as an enemy ;  
Ye strip off the vestment as well as the robe  
From those who walk along securely,  
From those who are returning from battle.
9. The women of my people ye thrust out  
From their darling home ;  
From their children ye take away my glory for  
ever.
10. Arise ! depart ! for this is not the place of your  
rest ;  
Because of pollution it will destroy,  
And the destruction shall be grievous.
11. If a man walking in the spirit of falsehood and  
lies,  
Prophecy to thee of wine and strong drink,  
Even he shall be the prophet of this people.
12. I will surely gather thee entirely, O Jacob !  
I will surely collect the remainder of Israel ;  
I will put them together as sheep in a fold,

8.—1 at the beginning of this verse is strongly adversative. Very different was the character of those whom the prophet was now reproving. יָמִינִי, properly *yesterday*, is taken by some to signify *lately* ; but it is more in keeping with the spirit of the passage to render it *anciently*, of *old*, or the like. The rebellious conduct of the Hebrew nation was no new thing. It had characterised every period of its history.

9.—*The women*.—As the prophet refers to war, it is most likely he intended by the “women” the widows of those who had fallen in battle, and who ought to have been objects of special sympathy and care.—*For ever*.—Never to make restitution.

10.—*Place of your rest*.—Canaan was conferred upon the Hebrews as a *rest*, or place of quiet enjoyment after their fatigues and troubles in the wilderness, Numb. x., v. 33 ; Deut. xii., v. 9 ; Ps. xcv., v. 11.—*Destroy*.—A land may be said to destroy its inhabitants, when it withholds from them the means of subsistence, and forces them to leave it. With such reference it is described as devouring them and spewing them out of it, Lev. xviii., v. 28 ; xx., v. 22 ; xxvi., v. 38 ; Ezek. xxxvi., vv. 12—14.

11.—*Falsehood and lies*.—Predicting only preposterous things according to your wishes ; to him you will listen.

12.—*Sheep in a fold*.—So the Targum, Gesenius, Winer, Hitzig, and Ewald. This prophecy relates to the future literal restoration of the Jews under the Messiah.

As a herd in the midst of their stall ;  
 They shall be in commotion,  
 Because of the multitude of men.

13. The breaker is gone up before them ;  
 They break through and pass to the gate ;  
 They go out by it.  
 Their king passeth on before them,  
 Even the Lord, at their head.

### CHAPTER III.

1. And I said : Hear, I pray, O ye heads of Jacob !  
 And ye judges of the house of Israel !  
 Is it not yours to know justice ?
2. Who hate good, and love evil ;  
 Who strip their skin from off them,  
 And their flesh from off their bones.
3. Who devour the flesh of my people,  
 And flay their skin from off them ;  
 Who break their bones in pieces,  
 And separate them as in the pot,  
 And as flesh within the caldron.
4. Then they may cry to the Lord,  
 But He will not answer them,  
 He will even hide His face from them at that time ;  
 Because they have corrupted their doings.

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1-3.—The ל in לָכֵן is expressive of duty or obligation ; what the persons spoken of were bound to do, and what might naturally be expected from them in the station which they filled. יָדַע is here used, not of merely speculative knowledge, but of that which is practical. It was the province of the magistrates to exercise their judicial authority for the protection of the innocent, and the punishment of the evil-doers. But instead of thus discharging the duties of their office, they were themselves perpetrators of the most flagrant acts of oppression and cruelty.

4.—אִי, then, and בְּעֵת הַהִיא, at that time, are anticipative of the period of divine judgment. The infliction of such judgment is implied, not expressed. The more emphatically to convey an impression of its certainty, the prophet takes it for granted. *Because*.—I take בְּכִנְיָאֵל to be causal, as in Num. xxvii., v. 14 ; I Sam. xxviii., v. 18 ; II Kings, xvii., v. 26.

5. Thus saith the Lord respecting the prophets
Who cause my people to err ;
Who bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace ;
But against him that putteth not into their mouth
They prepare war.
6. Therefore ye shall have night without vision ;
Ye shall have darkness without divination ;
Yea, the sun shall go down upon the prophets,
And the day shall be black over them.
7. Then shall the seers be ashamed,
And the diviners confounded ;
They shall all cover their beard ;
For there shall be no response from God.
8. But verily I am filled with power
By the spirit of the Lord,
And of judgment and might ;
To declare unto Jacob his transgression,
And to Israel his sin.
9. Hear this, I pray,

5.—*Who bite with their teeth.* The antithesis requires to be understood in the sense of eating the food supplied by the people. While such supplics were granted, the false prophets predicted prosperity ; but if they withheld them, measures of a hostile nature, under a religious pretext, were adopted against them. Thus the Targum : “ They prophesy peace to him who feeds them with dinners of flesh.”

6, 7.—So completely should the predictions of the false prophets be disproved by the judgments that were to be brought on the nation, and so painfully should they themselves experience these judgments, that they could no longer have the effrontery to practise their deceptions. The obscuration of the heavenly bodies, or the light of day, is frequently employed by the prophets, as it is by Oriental writers generally, to denote affliction or calamity ; see Amos viii., v. 9.—*Their beard.*—Not *lips*. The beard is held in high estimation in the East, and in exhibiting which, properly grown and trimmed, the Orientals greatly pride themselves. To hide it, therefore, by covering it, was regarded as a striking mark of shame or sorrow. See Lev. xiii., v. 45 ; II Sam. xix., v. 25 ; Ezek. xxiv., vv. 17-22.

8.—Full of conscious sincerity, and of his divine commission, in the execution of which he was sustained by the influence of God's spirit, and zealous for the glory of God and the recovery of His people, Micah avows his readiness, with all boldness, to announce to them his inspired message respecting their sins.

9.—The prophet now proceeds to deliver in full the message which he had commenced, employing the same formula, מִי־יִשְׂרָאֵל, as he also does ch. vi., v. 1.

- Ye heads of the house of Jacob !
 And ye judges of the house of Israel !
 Who abhor justice,
 And pervert all equity.
10. Building Zion with blood,
 And Jerusalem with wickedness.
11. Her heads judge for reward,
 And her priests teach for hire ;
 Her prophets also divine for money ;
 Yet they lean upon the Lord, saying :
 " Is not the Lord among us ?
 " No calamity shall come upon us."
12. Therefore on your account
 Zion shall be ploughed as a field,
 Jerusalem shall become heaps,
 And the mountain of the temple
 As the high places of the forest.

CHAPTER IV.

1. And it shall come to pass in the latter days,
 That the mountain of the Lord's house

11.—שֹׁחַד, is a gift or bribe given to a judge to obtain freedom from punishment. Receiving bribes was strictly prohibited by the Mosaic law, Exod. xxiii., v. 8 ; Deut. xvi., v. 19. That the *priests* were authorised by that law to act in the capacity of ordinary religious teachers, does not appear. Their being thus employed by Jehosbaphat is narrated as something altogether extraordinary, II Chron. xvii., vv. 7-9. Besides attending to the ceremonial observances, they had devolved upon them the decision of controversies, Deut. xvii., vv. 8-11, xxi., v. 5 ; Ezek. xlv., v. 24 ; cases of leprosy, divorce, etc., Lev. x., v. 11. They were to lay down the law in such cases, and pronounce the final sentence. They are here associated with the judges, because in certain cases they gave a joint verdict ; and in the time of the prophet were equally avaricious and corruptible.

12.—*Zion*, designates the site of the city of David on the south ; *Jerusalem*, the houses occupied by the inhabitants generally in the centre and the north ; and *the mountain of the temple*, Moriah on the east.

1-3.—Compare Isaiah ii., vv. 2-4.—The verbal discrepancies are few and trivial. The sense is the same throughout.

- Shall be established on the top of the mountains,
 And be elevated above the hills,
 And the people shall flow to it.
2. And many nations shall go, and say :
 " Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
 " And to the house of the God of Jacob,
 " That He may teach us His ways,
 " And that we may walk in His paths ;
 " For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
 " And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."
3. And He shall arbitrate among many people,
 And give decision to many distant nations,
 So that they shall beat their swords into coulters,
 And their spears into pruning-knives ;
 Nation shall not raise a sword against nation,
 Neither shall they learn war any more.
4. And they shall sit, each under his vine,
 And under his fig-tree,
 And none shall make him afraid ;
 For the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it.
5. Though all the people should walk,
 Each in the name of his god,
 Yet we will walk in the name of the Lord our
 God,
 For ever and ever.
6. In that day, saith the Lord,
 I will gather her that halteth,
 And her that is driven out I will assemble,
 And her whom I have afflicted.
7. And I will make her that halted a residue,
 And her that was cast far off a strong nation ;
 The Lord shall then reign over them in Mount
 Zion,
 From henceforth, and for ever.

4.—This beautiful addition, which is not in Isaiah, appears to have been a common adage among the Hebrews to express a state of complete outward security, I Kings iv., v. 25 ; Zech. iii., v. 10.

5.—*Although*.—Compare for this use of the particle Gen. viii., v. 21. Exod. xiii., v. 17 ; Josh. xvii., v. 18.—*To walk in the name of anyone*, means to frame one's conduct according to his will, to act by his authority, and in accordance with his character.

8. And thou, O tower of Eder !
O fortress of the daughter of Zion !
To thee it shall come,
Even the former rule shall come,
The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem.
9. Why, now, dost thou cry aloud ?
Is there no king in thee ?
Hath thy counsellor perished ?
That pains should have seized thee
Like a woman in travail ?
10. Be in pain, bring forth, O daughter of Zion !
Like a woman in travail ;
For now thou shalt go forth from the city,
And shalt dwell in the field,
Thou shalt even go to Babylon ;
There thou shalt be delivered,
There the Lord shall redeem thee
From the hand of thine enemies.
11. And now many nations are gathered against thee,
Who say : " Let her be defiled !"
And : " Let our eyes look upon Zion !"
12. But they know not the designs of the Lord,
Neither do they understand His purpose ;
For He shall collect them
As sheaves into the threshing-floor.
13. Arise ! thresh, O daughter of Zion !

8.—*Tower of Eder*.—See Gen. xxxv., v. 21.

10.—Compare in reference to childbirth, Job xxxviii., v. 8 ; Ps. xxii., v. 10. Having employed the metaphor of a parturient female, the prophet carries it on in this verse, strikingly depicting the condition of anguish and distress which the Jews had to anticipate before they should enjoy deliverance.

12.—The enemies of the Jews had not the most distant idea, that God's object in permitting His people to be so treated was to recover them from idolatry, and thus prepare them for a triumphant restoration. The metaphor taken from the process of threshing out grain is frequently used by the prophets to denote the complete destruction of a people. Comp. Jer. li., v. 33.

13.—*Their gains*.—As conquerors used to consecrate a portion of their spoils to their deities by hanging them up in their temples, so the triumphant Hebrews would employ the riches which they acquired by their victories in beautifying the temple.

- For I will make thy horn iron,
 And thy hoofs copper,
 And thou shalt beat in pieces many nations;
 Thou shalt devote their gains to the Lord,
 And their substance to the Lord of all the earth.
14. Assemble yourselves now, O daughter of troops!
 We are besieged!
 With a rod they have smitten on the cheek
 The judge of Israel.

CHAPTER V.

1. But thou, Bethlehem Ephratha!
 The least though thou be
 Among the thousands of Judah,
 Yet out of thee shall he come forth unto Me,
 That is to be ruler in Israel;
 Whose origin is from olden times,
 From the most ancient days.
2. Therefore will He give them up,
 Until the time that she who travaileth hath
 brought forth;
 Then shall the remnant of his brethren
 Return with the children of Israel.
3. And he shall stand,
 And feed through the strength of the Lord,
 Through the majesty of the name of the Lord his
 God;
 And they shall abide;
 For now shall he be great

14.—*We are besieged.*—The siege in question Michaelis thinks was that by Sosius, the Roman general, B.C. 37, when Antigonus, the last of the Asmonæan dynasty, was obliged to submit to the superior power. Whether this prince be specifically intended I shall not determine.

1.—*Whose origin.*—Thus Aben Ezra, Abarbanel, Hartmann, Gesenius, Hitzig, Ewald, and others, and it refers to the Davidic extraction of the Messiah.

3.—*Feed.*—Israel understood.

- Even unto the ends of the earth.
4. And in this manner shall be the peace :
If the Assyrian should come into our land,
And tread in our palaces,
We will raise against him seven shepherds,
And eight anointed men.
 5. And they shall lay waste
The land of Assyria with the sword,
And the land of Nimrod at the gates thereof :
Thus will he deliver us from the Assyrian,
If he should come into our land,
Or tread within our borders.
 6. And the remnant of Jacob shall be
In the midst of many people,
Like dew from the Lord ;
Like showers upon herbs,
That wait not for man,
Nor hope for the sons of man.
 7. Yea, the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations,
In the midst of many people,
Like a lion among the beasts of the forest,
Like a young lion among the flocks of sheep,
Who, if he pass through,
Treadeth down, and rendeth,
And there is none to deliver.
 8. Thy hand shall be high against thine adversaries,
And all thine enemies shall be cut off.
 9. And it shall come to pass on that day,
Saith the Lord,
That I will cut off thy horses
From the midst of thee ;

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4.—The numbers *seven* and *eight* are used to denote indefinitely a full and sufficient number, as in Eccles. xi., v. 2, "Give a portion to seven, and also to eight." Comp. also Job v., v. 18 ; Prov. vi., v. 16 ; xxx., vv. 15, 18, 21 ; Amos i., vv. 3, 6, 9, etc.

7.—This verse describes the formidable character of the Jews in reference to the hostile nations by which they were attacked. For the accumulation and the rise in the meaning of the verbs וְקָרַף, וְרָמַס, וְעָבַר, comp. Exod. xv., v. 9 : אֶרְדָּף אֲשֵׁיג אֲחַלֵּק שָׁלַל.

- And I will destroy thy chariots.  
 10. I will cut off the cities from thy land,  
 And raze all thy fortresses.  
 11. I will cut off the sorceries from thy hand,  
 And thou shalt have no more diviners.  
 12. I will cut off thy graven images,  
 And thy statues from the midst of thee;  
 And thou shalt no more worship  
 The work of thine hands.  
 13. I will break down thine images of Astarte  
 From the midst of thee,  
 And destroy thy cities.  
 14. And I will execute vengeance in anger and in  
 wrath,  
 Upon the nations which have not been obedient.

## CHAPTER VI.

1. Hear ye now what the Lord saith :  
 Arise ! plead in the presence of the mountains ;  
 And let the hills hear thy voice.
2. Hear, O mountains ! the Lord's controversy,  
 And ye rocks, the foundations of the earth ;  
 For the Lord hath a controversy with His people,  
 And will contend with Israel.
3. O my people ! What have I done to thee ?  
 With what have I wearied thee ?  
 Testify against me !
4. Nay, I brought thee up from the land of Egypt,

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 1-2.—It is not unusual with the prophets to make appeals respecting the enormity of human guilt to the inanimate parts of creation, as if it were impossible for it not to inspire them with life, and call them forth as intelligent witnesses of what has taken place in their presence. See Deut. xxxii., v. 1 ; Isaiah i., v. 2 ; Jer. ii., vv. 12, 13. God, however, instead of bringing forward the charge, abdicates, as it were, His right, and leaves it to the guilty party to state the case. Comp. Isaiah xliii., v. 26.

3-4.—The Israelites are asked, in the kindest and most affecting style, what ground of complaint they had against the Lord, which could have induced them to act the part they did. Comp. Jer. ii., vv. 5, 31.—

- And redeemed thee from the house of slaves ;
 And sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.
5. O my people ! remember now
 What Balak the king of Moab consulted,
 And what Balaam the son of Beor answered him ;
 [Remember what happened]
 From Shittim to Gilgal,
 That ye may know the benefits of the Lord.
6. Wherewith shall I come before the Lord ?
 And bow myself before the high God ?
 Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings ?
 With calves of a year old ?
7. Will the Lord be satisfied with thousands of rams ?
 With ten thousand rivers of oil ?
 Shall I give my first-born for my transgression ?
 The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ?
8. He hath showed thee, O man ! what is good :
 And what doth the Lord require of thee,
 But to do justice, and love mercy,
 And to walk humbly with thy God.
9. The voice of the Lord crieth to the city :

פִּי, at the beginning of verse 4, is very expressive, and is equivalent to *nay, on the contrary, or the like.*—*Miriam.*—The Targum adds: לְאִזְמָתָהּ לְנִשְׂיָא, *to instruct the women.*

5.—The words “from Shittim to Gilgal,” are not to be construed with those immediately preceding ; for Balaam did not cross over Jordan to Gilgal, but was slain in the land of Midian, as we read Numb. xxxi., v. 8. Nor are we, with Ewald, to suppose them to be a marginal gloss ; but have merely to supply the ellipsis כִּי הָיָה, *what happened*, and repeat זָכוֹר, *remember*, from the first clause of the verse. To this effect the Targum, “Were not mighty deeds performed for you from the plain of Shittim to the house of Gilgal.”—*The benefits.*—Comp. Judg. v., v. 11 ; I Sam. xii., v. 7 ; Ps. xxiv., v. 7.

9.—Before announcing his message, the prophet parenthetically declares, that, whatever might be the treatment it would receive from the bulk of the people, the truly wise would regard it as God’s message, and having special respect to His revealed character as thereby disclosed, would find in it security and consolation in the approaching calamities. The *name* of the Lord is frequently used to express the sum total of the Divine attributes, and often stands for God himself.

- (And he who is wise will regard Thy name).
Hear, O ye tribes, Him that testifieth.
10. Are there still treasures of wickedness
In the house of the wicked?
And the accursed scanty ephah?
 11. Can I be innocent with wicked balances?
And with a bag of deceitful weights?
 12. Whose rich men are full of violence,
And her inhabitants speak falsehood;
Their tongue in their mouth is deceitful.
 13. I will surely smite thee incurably,
Rendering thee desolate on account of thy sins.
 14. Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied,
For thou shalt be inwardly depressed;
Thou mayest remove, but not rescue,
Or what thou rescuest I will give to the sword.
 15. Thou mayest sow, but shalt not reap;
Thou mayest tread the olive,
But shalt not pour out the oil;
And the grape of the new wine,
But the wine thou shalt not drink.
 16. The statutes of Omri are strictly kept,

10-12.—Several crimes are here specified as samples of those which abounded, and on account of which the Divine judgments were to be brought upon the land.—*Accursed*.—From אַעֲרָ, *to be angry, indignant*. This participial form presents the object as suffering the effects of anger, or as marked with the Divine displeasure.

13.—*Smite thee incurably*.—From הָלַח, *to be in pain, sick, etc.* As here used with the infinitive of נָחַם, *to smite, inflict punishment*, it gives intensity to the threatening, and expresses the incurable nature of the punishment.

14.—*Inwardly depressed*.—Most likely intended to express what we find in the Syr., “*The diarrhœa shall be within thee.*”

16.—Omri is specially mentioned, because he was the founder of Samaria and the wicked house of Ahab, and a supporter of the superstitions of Jeroboam; 1 Kings xvi., vv. 16, 28.—*That I may make*.—The Hebrews did not, indeed, commit the wickedness described with the intention of bringing upon themselves Divine punishment; but the punishment was as certainly connected with the sin, in the purpose of God, as if its infliction had been the end at which they aimed.

And all the works of the house of Ahab,
 And ye walk in their counsels;
 That I may make thee desolate,
 And the inhabitants thereof an object of hissing;
 And this reproach, ye, my people, shall bear.

CHAPTER VII.

1. Woe is me ! For I am
 As when they gather the summer fruit,
 As when the vintage is gleaned :
 There is no cluster to eat,
 No early fig which my soul desireth.
2. The pious hath perished from the land,
 And there is none upright among men ;
 They all lie in wait for blood,
 They hunt each other to destruction.
3. For evil their hands are well prepared ;
 The prince asketh,
 And the judge also, for a reward ;
 And the great man uttereth the depravity of his
 soul ;
 They combine to act perversely.
4. The best of them is like a prickly thorn ;

1.—In no part of his prophecy does Micah so fearfully describe the universal corruption of manners which prevailed among them, as in the first six verses of this chapter. The picture is peculiarly applicable to their character in the wicked reign of Ahaz, during which the prophet flourished.—*The early fig*.—The prophet compares the strong desire which he felt to meet with a single pious man, to that eagerness with which the traveller looks in vain for one of those delicious figs after the summer has advanced.

3.—This verse is very differently rendered by translators. The version of it which I have given, expresses as literally as possible the ideas, which, it is generally admitted, the prophet intended to convey. **יָצִיט** is frequently used to express the doing of anything *well, skilfully, aptly*, and the like. Here it is intransitive.—*Combine*.—The princes, judges, and great men, conspired to set aside all law and right in their treatment of the poor of the land.

4.—Both **טוֹב**, *good*, and **יָשָׁר**, *upright*, are here used superlatively. By “the day of thy watchmen,” the period of calamity predicted by the prophets is meant.

- The most upright worse than a thorn hedge ;
 The day of thy watchmen, thy visitation cometh ;
 Now shall be their perplexity.
5. Place no faith in a companion ;
 Trust not a familiar friend ;
 From her that lieth in thy bosom
 Guard the doors of thy mouth.
6. For the son despiseth his father ;
 The daughter riseth up against her mother ;
 The daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law :
 A man's enemies are the members of his own
 family.
7. But I will look for the Lord ;
 I will wait for the God of my salvation ;
 My God will hear me.
8. Rejoice not over me, O mine enemy !
 Though I have fallen, I shall rise again ;
 Though I sit in darkness,
 The Lord is my light.
9. I will bear the indignation of the Lord,
 Because I have sinned against Him ;
 Till He plead my cause,
 And give effect to my sentence ;
 He will bring me forth to the light ;
 I shall behold His righteousness.
10. Mine enemy also shall see it,

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7.—Having described their wickedness, the prophet abruptly changes the scene, and introduces them to view in that state of captivity in Babylon in which it was to issue. There, at a distance from the land of their fathers, they are brought to repentance, and the exercise of true piety ; and seeking again to their covenant God, they express the fullest confidence that He would in due time deliver them from banishment.

8-9.—Who the enemy intended by the prophet is, cannot be positively decided. Some interpreters think *Babylon* ; others *Edom*. For the former, see Jer. l., v. 11 ; for the latter Obad., v. 12 ; for both Ps. cxxxvii., vv. 7-8. The *ninth* verse contains a beautiful specimen of submissiveness and patient endurance of suffering, accompanied by the firm persuasion that when the chastisement has answered its end, God would graciously afford deliverance.

10.—Their deliverance was to be the occasion of the destruction of

And shame shall cover her.  
 She that said unto me :  
 "Where is the Lord thy God?"  
 Mine eyes shall behold her ;  
 She shall now be trodden upon  
 As the mire of the streets.

11. In the day when thy walls shall be rebuilt,  
 In that day the decree shall be extended.
12. In that day they shall come to thee,  
 From Assyria to Egypt;  
 From sea to sea, and mountain to mountain.
13. Nevertheless the land shall be desolate  
 On account of its inhabitants,  
 Because of the fruit of their doings.
14. Feed thy people with thy crook,  
 The flock of thine heritage;  
 That dwell alone in the wood,  
 In the midst of Carmel ;

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 their foes, who, because the Hebrews had no visible object of worship, and had been delivered into their power, tauntingly asked: "Where is the Lord thy God?"

11-12.—Micah resumes the language of prophecy, and, addressing Jerusalem, announces her restoration, and the way that would be paved for the conversion of the surrounding hostile nations to the true God. Whatever the decree or command was, the effect of its promulgation was to be the coming of foreigners from different regions to the Jewish people, re-assembling at Jerusalem. It was to be extended to all the countries round about Judea, in consequence of which great numbers would become proselytes to the Jewish faith.

12.—By מצור, I understand *Egypt*, and not *fortification*. Comp. II Kings xix., v. 24; Isaiah xix., v. 6. Upon this construction, Assyria and Egypt are contrasted, just as they are Isai. xix., v. 23, where the same subject is treated of in almost the same language. The concluding words of the verse stand irregularly for וְעַרְיָם וְעַרְיָם וְעַרְיָם.

14.—Micah addresses here a prayer to God, which, though brief, is distinguished for the poetical elevation of its style, and the appropriateness of its petition.—The regions of *Bashan* and *Gilead*, on the east of the Jordan, were celebrated for their rich pasturage, and were, on this account, chosen by the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, Numb. xxxii.; Deut. iii., vv. 12, 17. Comp. as strictly parallel, Jer. l., v. 19.

- Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead,
As in the days of old.
15. As in the days of their coming out
Of the land of Egypt,
I will show them marvellous things.
16. The nations shall see it,
And be ashamed of their power.
They shall lay their hand upon their mouth;
Their ears shall become deaf.
17. They shall lick dust like the serpent;
Like reptiles of the earth
They shall tremble from their hiding-places;
They shall stand in awe of the Lord our God;
They shall be afraid of Thee.
18. Who is a God like unto Thee,
Pardoning iniquity, and passing by transgression,
In regard to the remnant of His heritage?
He retaineth not His anger for ever,
Because He delighteth in mercy.
19. He will again have compassion upon us,
He will subdue our iniquities;
Yea, Thou wilt cast all our sins
Into the depths of the sea.
20. Thou wilt grant the truth to Jacob,
The kindness to Abraham,
Which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers
From the days of old.

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15.—God's answer to the prophet's prayer, assuring them, that the same power which had interposed in so remarkable a manner for their deliverance from Egypt, would again wonderfully appear on their behalf.

18.—Impelled by strong feelings of gratitude at the anticipated deliverance of his people, the prophet breaks out into a strain of the sublimest praise and admiration, and gives a description of the gracious character of God, unrivalled by any contained in the Scriptures.

19.—*Our sins*.—So several MSS.

# NAHUM.

## INTRODUCTION.

Owing to the paucity of information respecting the prophet Nahum, little can be said in regard to his life and times. All that we know of him personally is, that he was the native of a town or village called Elkosh, ch. i., v. 1.

Rashi, Abarbanel, and others, place him in the reign of Manasseh; Ewald and others make him contemporary with Josiah; whilst Eichhorn, Gesenius, Winer, Knobel, and others agree with Jerome in referring his ministry to the latter half of the reign of Hezekiah.

Where the prophet was when he delivered his predictions is not specified; but, from his familiar reference to Lebanon, Carmel, and Bushan, it may be inferred that he prophesied in Palestine; while the very graphic manner in which he describes the appearance of Sennacherib and his army, ch. i., vv. 9—12, would seem to indicate, that he was either in, or very near Jerusalem, at the time. What goes to confirm this supposition is the number of terms, phrases, etc., which he evidently borrowed of Isaiah.

Compare כָּלָה הוּא עֵשָׂה, i., v. 8, and כָּלָה יַעֲשֶׂה, verse 9, with נִשְׁטַף עֵבֶר, Is. viii., v. 8, and כָּלָה עֵשָׂה, Is. x., v. 23; בּוֹקֵק הָאָרֶץ וּבּוֹלֵקָה, Is. ii., v. 11, with בּוֹקֵק מְבוֹקָה וּמְבַלְלָקָה, Is. xxiv., v. 1; וַחֲלַחְלָה בְּבִלְמִתַּנִּים, Is. ii., v. 11, with חֲלַחְלָה, Is. xxi., v. 3; הִנֵּה עַל־הַהָרִים רִגְלֵי מְבַשֵּׂר מִשְׁמִיעַ שְׁלוֹם, Is. ii., v. 1, with מִה נָּאוּ עַל־הַהָרִים רִגְלֵי מְבַשֵּׂר מִשְׁמִיעַ שְׁלוֹם, Is. lii., v. 7, etc.

The style of Nahum is of a very high order. He is inferior to none of the Minor Prophets, and scarcely to Isaiah himself in animation, boldness, and sublimity. The rhythm is regular and singularly beautiful; and, with the exception of a few foreign or provincial words, his language possesses the highest degree of purity.

# NAHUM.

## CHAPTER I.

1. The sentence of Nineveh.  
The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.
2. The Lord is a jealous and avenging God ;  
The Lord is an avenger and furious ;  
The Lord avengeth His adversaries,  
And watcheth for His enemies.
3. The Lord is long-suffering, but great in power,  
He will by no means treat them as innocent ;  
The Lord hath His way in the whirlwind  
And in the storm,  
And the clouds are the dust of His feet.
4. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry,  
He parcheth up all the rivers ;  
Bashan languisheth, and Carmel,  
And the flower of Lebanon languisheth.
5. The mountains quake at Him,  
And the hills are melted ;

1.—*The sentence of Nineveh.*—This heading is undoubtedly added by a later hand. Were it genuine, the order of the headings would have been reversed.

2.—*Furious.*—פַּעַל חֶמָּה, lit., a lord, or master of fury, an idiom by which the possession of an attribute or quality is frequently expressed. Comp. פַּעַל הַחֲלֻמוֹת, a master of dreams, i.e., a dreamer.

3.—*As innocent.*—Those who are guilty. The idea conveyed by the metaphor, the clouds are the dust of his feet, is very sublime. Large and majestic as the clouds may be, in reference to God, they are but as the most minute particles of dust raised by the feet in walking.

5.—*The earth heaves.*—The root is נָשָׂא, to raise, lift up ; intransitively, to lift up oneself ; and appropriately expresses here the raising or heaving of the ground by an earthquake.

- The earth heaves at His presence,  
The world and all that inhabit it.
6. Before His indignation who can stand ?  
And who can subsist in the heat of His anger ?  
His fury is poured out like fire,  
And the rocks are overthrown by Him.
  7. The Lord is good, a fortress in the day of distress ;  
And He knoweth those that trust in Him.
  8. But with an overflowing inundation  
He will effect a consummation of her place,  
And darkness shall pursue His enemies.
  9. What devise ye against the Lord ?  
He will effect a consummation ;  
Distress shall not twice arise.
  10. For though they are interwoven as thorns,  
And thoroughly soaked with their wine,  
They shall be consumed like stubble fully dry.
  11. From thee he came forth,  
The deviser of mischief against the Lord,  
The wicked counsellor.
  12. Thus saith the Lord :  
Though they are prosperous and very numerous,  
Yet shall they be cut down and pass away ;

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7, 8.—There is a marked antithesis in these two verses, in the course of which the prophet arrives at his main topic, the destruction of Nineveh. In בִּישְׁמֵף עֵבֶר the metaphor of a river impetuously overflowing its banks, rushing into the adjacent country, and passing through, carrying all before it, is employed to denote the ruthless invasion of a country by a hostile and powerful army. It is used by Isaiah, ch. viii., v. 8 ; and here Nahum appropriates the language for the purpose of describing the triumphant progress of the Medo-Babylonian troops when advancing towards Nineveh.

Her place.—The place of Nineveh, the metropolis of Assyria, the overthrow of which the prophet was afterwards to describe.

10.—Briars and thorns are employed by the prophets to denote the soldiers composing a hostile army. See Is. x., v. 17 ; xxvii., v. 4.

The metaphor is here taken from a thicket of thorns, the prickly branches of which are so closely intertwined as to present an impenetrable front to those who would enter it. Such were the celebrated military phalanxes of antiquity, consisting of bodies of troops armed with long spears, and arranged in the form of a square.

- Though I have afflicted thee,
I will afflict thee no more.
13. For now I will break his yoke from off thee,
And burst thy bands asunder.
14. And the Lord will command concerning thee,
That thy name be no more scattered abroad;
From the house of thy gods I will cut off
The graven and the molten image;
I will make it thy grave,
Because thou art worthless.

CHAPTER II.

1. Behold! upon the mountains
Are the feet of him that announceth good,
That publisheth peace;
Celebrate thy feasts, O Judah! perform thy vows,
For the wicked shall no more pass through thee;
He is entirely cut off.
2. The disperser hath come up before thee;
Keep the fortress, watch the way,

14.—We have here another apostrophe to the Assyrian Monarch, announcing to him that his dynasty should not be perpetuated, that his favourite idols should be destroyed, and that the very temple in which he worshipped them should become his grave. When it is said, that "his name shall no more be scattered abroad," the meaning is *not*, that none of his sons should succeed him in the government, but that his dynasty should cease on the arrival of the event predicted by Nahum, the destruction of Nineveh. No mention is made in history of the sepulture of Sennacherib, but we are told, II Kings xix., v. 37; Is. xxxvii., v. 38, that he was slain by two of his sons while in the act of worship in the temple of Nisroch his god. And there can be no doubt that it is to this event reference is here made.

1.—This applies to what took place on the miraculous deliverance of Jerusalem, recorded Isaiah xxxvii., v. 36. They are almost identical, so far as they go, with the language of Isaiah lii., v. 7, relative to the return from Babylon. During the Assyrian invasion, the inhabitants of Judah were cut off from all access to the metropolis; now, they would be at liberty to proceed thither as usual, in order to observe their religious rites.

2.—With Abarbanel, Kimchi, and Rashi, I think that the words are addressed to Hezekiah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for the

- Make fast the loins;
Strengthen thee with power to the utmost.
3. For the Lord restoreth the excellency of Jacob,
As He will the excellency of Israel;
Though the wasters have wasted them,
And destroyed their vine branches.
4. The shield of his heroes is dyed red,
The warriors are clothed with scarlet;
The chariots are furnished with fiery scythes,
In the day of his preparation;
And the cypresses are brandished.
5. The chariots dash on the commons,
They run furiously in the open places;
They appear like torches,
They flash like lightnings.
6. He recounteth his nobles;
They stumble in their march;

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purpose of inspiring them with courage to hold out during the Assyrian attack.

3.—*The pride of Jacob.*—The land of Canaan. This land, as the prophet immediately adds, had been spoiled by the Assyrians, who had not only carried away the ten tribes into captivity, but taken the fortified cities of Judah; but it was again to be restored, partly on the destruction of the Assyrians, and completely on the return from Babylon.—*Jacob and Israel* are, as frequently, put for the people of the two kingdoms.

4.—The prophet now describes the siege and capture of Nineveh, which involved the downfall of the Assyrian empire.—*Fiery scythes.*—פְּלִיָּדָה, *iron, steel.* Syr. the same. For the manufacture of swords of the finest steel, not only Damascus, but certain towns east of the Caucasus have long been celebrated; and that this compound metal is of high antiquity, is universally allowed. It is doubtless what Jeremiah means by *iron from the north*, and which he distinguishes from *common iron*, chapter xv., v. 12.—By *cypresses*, are meant *spears or lances*, the staves of which were made of the branches of the cypress.

5.—This verse Ewald explains of the preparations made by the Ninevites for the defence of the city; but the war-chariot could not be used within the walls: they could only be effective in the open field. חוּצוֹת, signifies not merely streets, as being *without* the houses of a city, but also the *out fields* or *commons* without the city itself. In like manner רֵחְבוֹת, as its parallel, denotes any wide or open spaces in the suburbs without the gates.



- They hasten to her wall,  
And the defence is prepared.
7. The flood-gates are opened,  
And the palace is dissolved.
8. Though firmly established,  
She is made bare ; she is carried up,  
While her handmaids moan like doves,  
And smite [their hands] upon their hearts.
9. Though Nineveh hath been like a pool of water,  
From the most ancient time,  
Yet they are fleeing :  
" Stop ! Stop !" but none looketh back.
10. Plunder the silver, plunder the gold ;  
There is no end to the store ;  
There is abundance of all covetable vessels.
11. Emptiness and emptiedness and void,  
Heart-melting and tottering of knees ;  
There is intense pain in all loins,  
And all faces withdraw their colour.
12. Where is the den of the lioness ?  
And the feeding-place of the young lions ?  
Where the lion and the lioness walked,  
The lion's cub also, and none disturbed them ?
13. The lion tore for the supply of his cubs,  
And strangled for his lioness ;

8.—נִצֵּז has given rise to a great diversity of opinion. Ewald and others think that the queen of Nineveh, supposed to be here called "Huzzab," is intended. But to this I must object, on the ground, that *persons* are never introduced *by name* into prophecy, except for some important purpose, as in the case of Cyrus.—Nineveh is represented as a queen degraded from her dignity, and led away captive by the enemy ; her female slaves following and deploring her fate.

10.—The prophet compares the royal city to a reservoir of water ; on account of the confluence of people from the surrounding provinces. All who could make their escape, now took to flight ; no entreaties could induce them to remain.

12-14.—A beautiful allegory, setting forth the rapacious, irresistible, and luxurious character of the king of Assyria, and the destruction of Nineveh, the seat of his empire, with all his armies, and their means of supply.—*Thy villages*.—So the Targum, and is no doubt the true reading. Comp. Ezek. xxxviii., v. 13, where the same reading ought to be adopted.

- He filled his dens with prey,  
 And his habitations with rapine.
14. Behold ! I am against thee,  
 Saith the Lord of hosts ;  
 I will burn her chariots into smoke ;  
 The sword shall devour thy villages,  
 And I will cut off thy prey from the land :  
 The voice of thy messengers shall be heard no  
 more.

## CHAPTER III.

1. Woe to the city of blood !  
 She is filled with deceit and violence ;  
 The prey is not removed.
2. The sound of the whip,  
 And the noise of the rattling wheels,  
 The horses prancing, and the chariots bounding ;
3. The mounting of horsemen,  
 The gleaming of swords,  
 And the lightning of spears ;  
 The multitude of slain,  
 And the mass of corpses ;  
 There is no end to the carcasses :  
 They stumble over their carcasses.
4. Because of the many harlotries of the harlot,  
 The very graceful mistress of enchantments ;  
 Who sold nations through her fornications,  
 And tribes through her enchantments.
5. Behold ! I am against thee.  
 Saith the Lord of hosts ;

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2, 3.—The description which the prophet here gives of the approach of the enemy, his attack on the city, and the slaughter of the besieged is exquisitely graphic. The passage is unrivalled by any other, either in sacred or profane literature.

4.—The idolatrous practices of the Ninevites, and the means which they employed to seduce others to worship their gods, are here represented as the principal cause of their destruction. The metaphor of an unchaste female, and the seductive arts which she employs, is not unfrequent in the prophets.

- I will uncover thy skirts to thy face,  
And show the nations thy nakedness,  
And the kingdoms thy shame.
6. I will cast abominable things upon thee,  
And disgrace thee ;  
And will make thee a gazing-stock.
7. And every one that seeth thee  
Shall flee from thee,  
And shall say : " Nineveh is destroyed !  
" Who will commiserate her ?"  
Whence shall I seek comforters for thee ?
8. Art thou better than No-Ammon,  
Which is situated among the rivers ;  
That had waters around her ;  
Whose rampart was the sea,  
Waters her wall ?
9. Cush strengthened her, and Egypt,  
With countless hosts ;  
Put and the Lybians were thine auxiliaries.
10. Yet she became an exile,  
She went into captivity ;  
Her young children were dashed in pieces  
At the top of all the streets ;  
They cast lots for her honorable men,  
And all her great men were bound in chains.

5, 6.—This seems to refer to an ancient mode of punishing strumpets, by stripping them of all their gaudy attire, and exposing them, covered with mud and filth, to the gaze of insulting spectators. The abhorrent character of the figure constitutes the very reason of its selection. Comp. Ezek. xvi., vv. 37-41.

8.—*No-Ammon*.—In Jer. xlv., v. 25, we have " Ammon of No." Most commentators agree that Thebes is meant. Of the conquest of this famous city, here referred to by Nahum, no mention is made in profane history, but it not improbably took place on the advance of the Assyrian army under Sargon, B.C. 714.

9.—Not only was Thebes strong by nature and art, and in the number of her native troops; she also possessed immense military resources in her African auxiliaries. *Put*.—The region immediately to the west of Lower Egypt, and conterminous with Lybia proper.

10, 11.—If the celebrated metropolis of Egypt, with all its means of defence was captured, and its inhabitants subjected to all the

11. Thou also shalt be drunken,  
Thou shalt hide thyself,  
Thou shalt seek a refuge from the enemy.
12. All thy fortresses shall become  
Like fig-trees with early figs;  
If they be shaken,  
They fall into the eater's mouth.
13. Behold! Thy people are as women in the midst  
of thee;  
The gates of thy land  
Shall be thrown wide open to thine enemies;  
Fire shall consume thy barriers.
14. Draw water for the siege;  
Strengthen thy fortifications;  
Enter the mire, and tread the clay;  
Repair the brick-kiln.
15. There the fire shall consume thee,  
The sword shall cut thee off;  
It shall consume thee like the licking locust;  
Be thou numerous as the licking locusts;  
Be thou numerous as the swarming locusts.
16. Thou hast increased thy merchants  
More than the stars of heaven;  
The licking locusts spread themselves out,  
And took their flight.
17. Thy princes were as swarming locusts,  
And thy captains as the largest locusts,

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cruelties and indignities usually inflicted by the victors, what was there in Nineveh to claim exemption?

13.—*Thy barriers*.—Some render בָּרִיחַיָּךְ, *thy fugitives*; but as fugitives are always represented as perishing by *the sword*, and never by *fire*, the signification *barriers* must be retained.

14.—The prophet ironically summons the Ninevites to make every effort in the way of preparing for a long and vigorous defence of the metropolis itself. As water is one the first necessities, it behoved them to see to it that the cisterns, etc., were well filled. They were also to put the fortifications in a perfect state.

17.—*Thy captains*.—מַלְאָכָיו occurs only here, and in Jer. li., v. 27, in the singular. It occurs in the Targum of Jonathan, Deut. xxviii., v. 12, as the name of a superior angel.

- That encamp in the hedges in the cold day :
 The sun ariseth, then they flee,
 And the place where they were is unknown.
18. Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria !
 Thy nobles have lain down ;
 Thy people are dispersed upon the mountains,
 And there is none that collecteth them.
19. There is no alleviation of thy ruin ;
 Thy wound is grievous ;
 All that hear the report of thee
 Shall clap their hands at thee,
 For upon whom did not thy wickedness unceasingly pass ?

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18.—*Thy shepherds.*—The viceroys appointed to govern the provinces under the king of Assyria.

19.—The deliverance of the king of Nineveh was utterly hopeless. Nothing remained but for the prophet to announce his end, and the joy which the surrounding states would express at the irretrievable ruin of an empire, whose iron sway had been so extended, and whose cruel oppressions had been unintermitting.

# H A B A K K U K .

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## INTRODUCTION.

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Of the prophet Habakkuk, we possess no information but what is purely apocryphal. The position of Delitzsch, founded upon the subscription, chapter iii., v. 19, that he was of the tribe of Levi, and engaged in the temple service, is too precarious to warrant its adoption.

Considerable difference of opinion obtains respecting the time at which he flourished, some placing him in the first years of Manasseh ; some in the period of the exile ; again many are of opinion that he prophesied in the reign of Jehoiachim, about 608—604 B.C. This last hypothesis seems best supported, since the Chaldeans are spoken of, chapter i., vv. 5, 6, as being upon the point of invading Judah, but not as having actually entered it.

In point of general style, Habakkuk is universally allowed to occupy a very distinguished place among the prophets, and is surpassed by none of them in dignity and sublimity. Whatever he may occasionally have in common with previous writers, he works up his own peculiar manner, and is evidently no servile copyist or imitator. His figures are well chosen, and fully carried out. His expressions are bold and animated ; his descriptions graphic and pointed. The parallelisms are for the most part regular and complete. The lyric ode contained in chapter iii. is justly esteemed one of the most splendid and magnificent within the whole compass of Hebrew poetry.

# HABAKKUK.

## CHAPTER I.

1. The sentence which Habakkuk the prophet saw.
2. How long shall I cry, O Lord !  
And Thou hearest not ?  
How long shall I cry to Thee of violence,  
And Thou savest not ?
3. Why dost Thou show me iniquity,  
And cause me to behold grievance ?  
For spoiling and violence are before me :  
And there are that raise up strife and contention.
4. Therefore the law is neglected,  
And true judgment goeth not forth ;  
Because the wicked circumvent the righteous,  
Therefore perverted judgment goeth forth.
5. Look among the nations, and behold !  
Be ye greatly astonished ;  
For I will perform a work in your days,  
Which ye will not believe, though it be told you.

2.—*How long.*—The influence of עַד־אֵנָּה, *how long*, upon the Preterite and Future tenses in this verse, so modifies them, as to give them the force of a present time, though the one includes what had taken place down to such time, and the other, the possibility of its being still carried forward into the future.—Because הָמָס, *violence*, occurs without a preposition, Hitzig thinks it was what was done to the prophet himself; but it is better to supply עַל, *on account of*, with the Targum.

4.—*Therefore.*—עַל־כֵּן, refers not to the state of things set forth in the verse immediately preceding, but to God's forbearing to punish, spoken of verse 2.—*True judgment.*—In the time of the prophet justice was utterly corrupted, in consequence of which there was no security either for person or property.—*Circumvent.*—מְבַתֵּיר is here used in a bad sense, to express the ensnaring of a person by fraud and artifice.

6. For, behold ! I will raise up the Chaldeans,  
That bitter and impetuous nation ;  
Which traverseth the wide regions of the earth,  
To possess habitations not their own.
7. It is terrible and dreadful ;  
Its judgment and its dignity are from itself.
8. Swifter than leopards are its horses,  
And lighter than evening wolves :  
Its horsemen spread proudly along ;  
Yea, its horsemen that come from afar :  
They fly like an eagle hastening to devour.
9. It cometh entirely for violence ;  
The aspect of their faces is like the east wind ;  
It collecteth the captives as sand.
10. It maketh a mockery of kings,  
And princes are a laughter to it ;  
It smileth at every fortress,  
It heapeth up earth and taketh it.
11. Then it gaineth fresh spirit ;  
It passeth onward, and contracteth guilt,  
[Saying] Is this his power through his God ?

6.—*I will raise up*.—This refers to the special *raising up* of the Chaldeans to undertake the expedition against Judea, and *not* to their organisation as a political power, since they had already been upwards of twenty years in possession of such power under Nebopolassar. By **רע**, *bitter*, the fierce and cruel disposition of the Chaldeans is expressed. Comp. Jer. l., v. 42.

7.—The prophet has in view the self-assumed political superiority of the Chaldeans in the Babylonian empire. As they had raised themselves to that dignity, so they would permit none to share in their counsels and determinations, but would act in the most arbitrary manner.

9.—Nothing could more appropriately describe the terrific appearance of the destructive Chaldean army, than the samoon, which occasions awful devastation in the regions over which it passes. The collecting of the captives *like sand*, which the prophet immediately adds, corroborates the opinion that the samoon is intended, as it is frequently accompanied with whirlwinds of sand, which is collected and carried with great rapidity across the desert.

11.—**וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה** is the accusative to **הִלָּחֵץ**, which denotes *to succeed, exchange, renew*, etc.; the phrase means, to assume, or gain a fresh accession of courage or military spirit. Elated by the fortresses they had taken,



12. Art not Thou from eternity, O Lord!  
My God, my Holy One! we shall not die:  
O Lord! Thou hast appointed it for judgment:  
O Rock! Thou hast ordained it for correction.
13. Thou art of purer eyes than to regard evil;  
Thou canst not behold injustice.  
Why dost Thou behold the plunderers?  
Why art Thou silent when the wicked  
Destroyeth one more righteous than himself?
14. And makest men as the fishes of the sea,  
As the reptiles which have no ruler?
15. It bringeth up all with its hook,  
It gathereth them into its net,  
It collecteth them into its drag,  
Therefore it rejoiceth and exulteth.
16. Therefore it sacrificeth to its net,  
And burneth incense to its drag;  
Because through them its portion is fat,  
And its food plenteous.
17. Is it for this that it emptieth its net,  
And spareth not to slay the nations continually?

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and the victories they had won in heathen countries, the Chaldeans are represented as passing onwards into Judea, and treating with contempt the feeble resistance made to them by the Jews, asking sarcastically, "Is this all your boasted power conceded to you by the God in whom you confide?" This simple construction of the verse at once frees it from the numerous difficulties with which it has been involved by interpreters.

13.—*The plunderers.*—The Chaldeans, who had been the allies of the Jews, but now treated them with violence.—*More righteous.*—Wicked as the Jews were, they were righteous in comparison to the Babylonians.

15—17.—פלה is allowed by all to be here the accusative. Converting the simile employed in the preceding verse into a metaphor, the prophet describes the rapacity of the Chaldeans, the indiscriminate and universal havoc which they would effect, and their proud confidence in their prowess. The hook, the net, and the drag, are separately mentioned, to indicate that every means would be employed in taking captives.—By the emptying of the net, verse 17, is meant the depositing of the captives in Babylon, in order to go forth to fresh conquest and plunder.

CHAPTER II.

1. I will stand upon my watch-post,
And station myself upon the fortress,
And will look out to see what He will say to me,
And what I shall reply in regard to my argument.
2. And the Lord answered me, and said :
Write the vision, and make it plain on tablets,
That he who readeth it may run.
3. For the vision is still for an appointed time,
But it shall speak at the end, and not lie ;
Though it should delay, wait for it,
For it will surely come, and not tarry.

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1.—Habakkuk, anxious to ascertain the divine purpose relative to the enemies of his people, brought his mind into such a state of holy expectancy as was favourable to the reception of supernatural communications. צִפָּה, *to look about*, (from which צוֹפֵה, *a watchman*, is derived, as likewise מִצְפָּה, *a watch-tower*,) is employed, as here in Piel, to express the looking out for an answer to prayer.—*My argument*.—In תוֹכַחְתִּי, the suffix is not to be taken passively, but actively, *i.e.*, the תוֹכַחַת, *argument, complaint, reproof*, or in what way soever the word may be rendered, was not any employed by others, but what the prophet himself had employed in the preceding chapter. He was desirous of obtaining an answer to the statement which he had there made respecting the Divine conduct in permitting the Chaldeans to multiply their conquests without end.

2.—*Tablets*.—הַלְלוֹת having the article, Ewald thinks the prophet refers to the tables which were openly exhibited in the market-place, on which public announcements were graven in large and clear characters in common use among the people. The article, however, may only designate the tables which were to be employed for the purpose. The reason why the prophecy should be legible, was, that whosoever read it might run and publish it to all within his reach. It was a joyful message to the Hebrews, involving as it did the destruction of their oppressor, and their own consequent deliverance.

3.—Though the destruction of the Chaldean power, about to be predicted, was not to take place immediately, yet it would infallibly happen at the termination of the period appointed for the exercise of its oppression, and for the deliverance of the captive Hebrews.

4. Behold the proud !  
His soul is not tranquil within him ;  
But the just by his faith, shall live.
5. Moreover, wine is treacherous ;  
The haughty man stayeth not at home,  
Because he enlargeth his desire as Hades ;  
He is even as death, and cannot be satisfied ;  
He gathereth for himself all the nations,  
And collecteth for himself all the people.
6. Shall not all these utter a parable against him,  
A taunting proverb against him, and say :  
Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his !  
How long ?—  
And ladeth himself with thick clay !
7. Shall not they rise up suddenly  
That will bite thee ?  
And awake that will harass thee ?  
And thou shalt become their prey.
8. Because thou hast plundered many nations,  
All the remainder of the people shall plunder  
thee ;  
Because of the blood of men,

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4.—*The proud.*—עֲפָלָה I consider to be an abstract noun, used elliptically for אִישׁ עֲפָלָה, *a man of arrogance*, and so to be rendered adjectively *the proud*.

5.—The phrase הֵינִי בֹנֵה, has its parallel, Prov. xxx., v. 1, לֵץ הֵינִי. The prophet has his eye upon the intemperance to which the Babylonians were greatly addicted.—*Enlargeth his desire.*—The insatiable desire of conquest, which specially showed itself in the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, is here forcibly predicted.

6.—The קִישָׁל commences immediately, and occupies the rest of the chapter. It consists of five stanzas, of three verses each. Each stanza has its distinct and appropriate subject, and they all commence with הִי, *Woe!* the denunciative interjection ; and have each, with the exception of the last, a verse at the close, beginning with כִּי, thus forming an organic whole of singular force and beauty. See verses 18, 19, and note.

8.—The remainder of the nations consisted of those who had escaped the devastation of the Chaldeans.

- And the violence done to the land,
To the city, and all that dwell in it.
9. Woe to him that procureth
Wicked gain for his house,
That he may establish his nest on high,
To be preserved from the power of calamity!
 10. Thou hast devised shame for thy family,
By cutting off many people,
And sinning against thyself.
 11. For the stone crieth from the wall,
And the brick from the timber answereth it.
 12. Woe to him that buildeth a town by blood,
And establisheth a city through injustice!
 13. Are not these things from the Lord of Hosts,
That people shall labour for the very fire,
And nations weary themselves for vanity?
 14. Surely then shall the earth be filled
With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,
As the waters cover the sea.
 15. Woe to him that giveth his neighbour drink,
Pouring out Thy wrath, and making him drunk;
In order to look upon their nakedness!
 16. Thou art filled with shame instead of glory;
Drink thou also, and uncover thy foreskin.

9.—The phrase **בַּצֵּעַ בַּצֵּעַ** is very common in Hebrew. The verb denotes *to cut*, or *break off*, as the Orientals, especially the Chinese, do, pieces of silver and other metals in their money transactions with each other. Hence it came to be applied in a bad sense, to such as were greedily occupied with such transactions, and its derivative **בָּצַע**, to signify *wicked gain*, *lucre*.

11.—**כִּבְרִית** occurs only here. According to the Mishna the word signifies a *half brick*, which Parchon also gives as the same meaning. He describes it: **לבנים קטנים עשויין בכבשן ככלי חרס ובונים בהם הבנינים**. *Small bricks prepared in the kiln like pottery, and used in building edifices*. Rashi explains it to be “half a brick which is usually laid between two layers of wood.”

15.—*Thy wrath*.—Comp. **וְאַשְׁכְּרֶם בְּחִמָּתִי**, Is. lxiii., v. 6.

16.—*Uncover*.—In the mouth of a Hebrew no term could have expressed more ineffable contempt. As the Chaldeans had treated the

- The cup of the Lord's right hand
 Shall come round to thee,
 And great ignominy shall be upon thy glory.
17. For thy violence to Lebanon shall cover thee,
 As the destruction of beasts terrifieth them;
 Because of the blood of men,
 And the violence done to the land,
 To the city, and all that dwell in it.
18. What profiteth the graven image
 Which its maker graveth,
 The molten image, and the teacher of falsehood?
 In which the maker of his work trusteth—
 Making dumb idols.
19. Woe to him that saith to the wood, Awake!
 Wake up! to the dumb stone!
 It teach! There it is,
 Overlaid with gold and silver,
 But there is no breath at all within it.
20. But the Lord is in His holy temple;
 Let all the earth be silent before Him.

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nations which they conquered in the most disgusting manner, so they in their turn, should be similarly treated.

17.—*As the destruction.*—Comp. Job v., v. 7, "Man is born to trouble, as the bird-tribes," etc. This construction entirely obviates the difficulty which necessarily attaches to the attempts that have been made to interpret the בְּהַמּוֹת of the inhabitants of Palestine. The prophet compares the confusion and destruction which should come upon the enemy of the Jews to those experienced by the wild beasts when brought into circumstances from which they cannot escape.

18, 19.—All the other stanzas having been introduced by a denunciatory הִנֵּה, *woe*, it is evident that a transposition has here taken place, and the 19th verse ought to be read before the 18th. We have then five stanzas of three verses each.—The idol is called "a teacher of falsehood," on account of the lying oracles that were connected with its worship. In the latter part of v. 19, the language is highly and pointedly ironical. הִנֵּה יוֹרֵה, *It teach!* is an emphatic form of putting a question which requires a negative reply. *There it is:*—הִנֵּה הוּא; such is the force of the interjection הִנֵּה in this place—it not being followed as usual by the accusative, but for the sake of making the idol more prominent, by the nominative case.

## CHAPTER III.

1. A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet:  
Upon Shigionoth.
2. O Lord! I heard the report of Thee,  
I was afraid:  
O Lord! revive Thy work in the midst of the  
years;  
In the midst of the years make it known:  
In wrath remember mercy.
3. God came from Teman;  
The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah.  
His splendour covered the heavens,  
And the earth was full of His praise.
4. The brightness was like that of the sun,

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1.—*Upon Shigionoth*.—For the explanation of the noun, which only occurs here and in the singular in the title of Psalm vii., different methods have been proposed. Several commentators render על־שִׁגְיוֹנוֹת, after the manner of elegies, but there seems no reason deducible, either from the present ode or from the psalm, why they should be thus characterised. The most probable explanation is that given by Delitzsch, who is of opinion that שִׁגְיוֹן means a *dithyrambos*, or *cantio erratica*, a species of rhythmical composition, which, from its enthusiastic irregularity, is admirably adapted for songs of victory or triumph.

2.—By “Thy work,” Abarbanel, Kimchi, and others, understand *the Jews*, on the ground that they are designated *the work* of God’s hands, Isaiah xlv., v. 11; but the simple occurrence of the same word, irrespective of the specific claims of the connection, cannot justify such a construction of the meaning. Rasbi: *Thy former work, when thou didst avenge us of our enemies, in the midst of the years of the calamity in which we live revive it, i.e., rouse it up, cause it to return.*

3.—שִׁלָּה is not used by any of the minor prophets except Habakkuk. It occurs four times in Daniel, once in Isaiah, but never in Jeremiah or Ezekiel.—*Selah*.—This term may be regarded as a substantive, signifying *silence* or *pause*; designed, in all probability, to command a cessation of the song or chant, while the instruments either repeated what had just been played, or introduced an interlude between the parts.

4.—*The sun*.—By שֶׁן we are not here to understand *light* simply, but *the sun* as the source of light. Comp. Job xxxi., v. 26.—That by

- Rays streamed from His hand,
 Yet the concealment of His glory was there.
5. Before Him went the plague;
 The burning pestilence followed Him.
 6. He stood, and made the earth to tremble;
 He looked, and caused the nations to shake;
 The old mountains were shattered,
 The ancient hills sank down—
 His ancient ways.
 7. I saw the tents of Cushan in trouble;
 The tent-curtains of Midian trembled.
 8. Was the Lord enraged against the rivers?
 Was Thine anger against the rivers?
 Was Thy wrath against the sea,
 That Thou didst ride upon Thy horses,
 In Thy chariots of victory?
 9. Naked and bare was Thy bow,
 "Seven of spears" was the word. Selah.
 Thou didst cleave the earth into rivers.

קִרְיָיִם, we are here to understand *rays*, is obvious from the connection, and from the comparison of the rising sun scattering his rays upon the earth to the gazelle, Ps. xxii., v. 1. Hence the verb קָרַן signifies to *emit rays*, Exod. xxxiv., vv. 29, 30, 35.

5.—קִשָּׁף has two leading significations, that of *lightning* or *flame*, and that of *hot* or *burning fever*. The latter is required to correspond to דִּבְרָר; it thus forbids the rendering of "birds of prey," as well as that of "lightning" or "burning coals." Kimchi: "קִשָּׁף corresponds to דִּבְרָר, the same thing expressed in different words. The word has the same signification, Deut. xxxii., v. 24, and denotes the fever, which consists in burning heat, and speedily causes death."

6.—*To tremble*.—יִמּוֹדֵר, the Pilel of מוֹד, which signifies *to be agitated*. So Ewald, Heidenheim, and Delitzsch.

9—*Seven of spears*.—Upwards of one hundred different interpretations have been proposed. That which I have adopted appears to me best to suit the connexion. The meaning of the prophet is, that God prepared His bow for battle, and ordered numerous spears to be produced; in other words, that he brought the most formidable and effective instrumentality to bear against the enemies of His people. For אֶמְרָא, word, comp. Ps. lxxviii., v. 12.

10. The mountains saw Thee, they were in pain ;
The inundation of water overflowed ;
The abyss uttered its voice,
It raised its hands on high.
11. Sun and moon stood back in their habitation,
At the light of Thine arrows which flew,
At the glittering brightness of Thy lance.
12. Indignant Thou didst march through the land ;
Wrathful Thou didst tread down the nations.
13. Thou wentest forth for the deliverance of Thy people,
For the deliverance of thine anointed ones ;
Thou dashedst into pieces the head of the house
of the wicked,
Laying bare the foundations of the very neck.
Selah.
14. Thou piercedst with his own spears

10.—*In pain.*—חַוִּיל, or חָיִל, properly signifies *to twist, writhe*, as with pain, and is frequently used of a woman in travail.

11.—*Stood back.*—עָמַד, does not mean here that the sun and moon remained stationary in a part of the firmament, which is represented as their dwelling or habitation, but that they *stood back* or *withdrew* into that locality.—*Which flew.*—Supply אֵשׁ before יִהְיֶה לְכֹנֵן, which is put in Piel for the purpose of marking the velocity of the motion of the arrows.

12.—מָרַח, *to march*, is used of the solemn and majestic proceeding of the Lord before the Hebrews, Judges v., v. 4; Ps. lxxviii., v. 8.—רָגַשׁ, *to thresh or tread down*, is applied metaphorically to the destruction of enemies, Micah iv., v. 13.

13.—Having described, in language of the most sublime and terrible import, the manifestations of God in reference to His enemies, Habakkuk now proceeds to specify in express terms the end which they were designed to answer, viz., the deliverance and safety of His chosen people.—*Anointed ones.*—Several MSS. have the plural.—Many commentators, both ancient and modern, follow the Vulgate, which renders the passage: *in salutem cum Christo tuo*; even Delitzsch has adopted it! As the Hebrews were a מַמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים, *a kingdom of priests*, Exod. xix., v. 6, they may with as much propriety be said to have been *anointed*, as the patriarchs are, I Chron. xvi., v. 22; Ps. cv., v. 15.

14.—*Spears.*—The same as מִטּוֹת, verse 9.—*His captains.*—The

- The chief of his captains,
 That rushed on like a tempest to scatter me ;
 Whose joy it was to devour the poor in secret.
15. Thou wentest with Thy horses through the sea,
 Through the heap of mighty waters.
16. I heard, and my inward parts trembled,
 At the sound my lips quivered ;
 Rottenness entered my bones,
 I trembled in my place,
 Oh ! shall I have rest in the day of trouble,
 When the people that attack us come up ?
17. When the fig-tree does not blossom,
 And there is no produce on the vines,
 When the fruit of the olive faileth,
 And the fields yield no food,
 When the flocks are cut off from the fold,
 And there is no cattle in the stalls ?
18. But I will exult in the Lord,
 I will be joyful in the God of my salvation.
19. The Lord, my God is my strength ;
 He will make my feet like those of gazelles,
 And cause me to walk on my heights.
 To the chief singer of my songs.

traditionary interpretation is that of *villagers*, hence *hordes*, which Delitzsch adopts. Better, however, as Gesenius, Ewald, and others, *judges* or *captains*.

16.—Having finished the poetic rehearsal of God's mighty acts on behalf of his people in ancient times, Habakkuk reverts to the fear which had seized him on hearing of the judgments that were to be inflicted upon his country by the Chaldeans.

ZEPHANIAH.

INTRODUCTION.

All that we know of Zephaniah is furnished by the title of his book. As in no other instance do we find the pedigree of a prophet carried so far back, it may not unfairly be inferred that he must have belonged to a family of considerable respectability. But the circumstance that the words "King of Judah" are not added to the proper name, militates against the position that he was a great-great-grandson of King Hezekiah. The number of generations also forms an objection against the hypothesis, since it is scarcely possible to make room for them in the short space of time between Hezekiah and Josiah.

Zephaniah must have flourished between the years B.C. 642 and B.C. 611. This is corroborated by certain circumstances in the book itself. For instance, he predicts the fall of Nineveh, and the overthrow of the Assyrian empire; consequently he must have prophesied prior to the year B.C. 625. The mention, too, of the destruction of "the remnant of Baal" (i., v. 4), evidently implies, that the abolition of idolatry had been carried on to a considerable extent, but had not yet been completed. Now this exactly tallies with the state of things in Judah from the twelfth to the eighteenth year of Josiah; for though this monarch began, in the former of these years, to effect a reformation, it was not till the latter that it was prosecuted with more successful results. If, therefore, we suppose that Zephaniah delivered his predictions between these two terms, we shall not be wide of the mark.

In respect to style, Zephaniah is not distinguished either for sublimity or elegance. He has much in common with Jeremiah, and some have regarded him as his abbreviator. A careful comparison of the two, however, proves the futility of this hypothesis.

ZEPHANIAH.

CHAPTER I.

1. The word of the Lord which was communicated to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hizkiah, in the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, King of Judah.
2. I will utterly take away every thing
From the face of the land, saith the Lord.
3. I will take away man and beast;
I will take away the birds of heaven,
And the fishes of the sea;
And the stumbling-blocks with the wicked;
And I will cut off man
From the face of the land, saith the Lord.
4. I will also stretch forth My hand against Judah,
And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem;
And I will cut off from this place the remnant of
Baal,
The name of the idolatrous
With that of the other priests.

3.—*Stumbling blocks.*—The idols; thus Rashi: הָם עֲבוֹדוֹת זָרוֹת. The particle אֶת before יִשָּׁעִים has the signification of *with, together with*. The idols and their worshippers were to be involved in one common destruction.

4.—הַכֹּהֲנִים. *The idolatrous priests.*—By using the term כֹּהֲנִים, the prophet had in view those who were professedly priests of the true God, but who, instead of checking, or endeavouring to eradicate idolatry, encouraged it by their indifference, or the inconsistency of their conduct in other respects.

5. And those that worship the host of heaven on the house-tops,
And those that worship and swear to the Lord,
And swear by Moloch.
6. And those that have turned back from the Lord,
And that neither seek the Lord, nor apply to Him.
7. Keep silence before the Lord God,
For the day of the Lord is near;
For the Lord hath prepared a slaughter,
He hath bidden His invited guests.
8. And it shall come to pass,
On the day of the Lord's slaughter,
That I will punish the princes and the king's sons,
And all that wear foreign apparel.
9. I will also punish all who leap
Over the threshold in that day,
Who fill the house of their master
With violence and deceit.

5.—*On the house-tops.*—The planet to which they specially burnt incense on the roofs of their houses is supposed to have been the *moon*, or it was more probably Venus, called "The Queen of heaven," Jer. vii., vv. 17, 18, 19, 25. The prophet next instances a mongrel class of worshippers, such as professed attachment to God, but at the same time were devoted to the service of Moloch, whom, in reality, they regarded as *their king*.

7.—The *invited guests*, כְּרִמִּי, were the Chaldeans, who, as the Divine army, or the instruments of His retributive justice, were called into the field against the enemies of the Most High.

8.—By "the sons of the king" we must not understand the immediate children of Josiah; he could not have had sons of an age sufficiently mature at the time the prophet uttered his prediction; for he could not himself have been above seventeen years old. It may either mean the princes of the royal house generally, or the children of the king who should be on the throne at the time of the accomplishment of the prophecy.

9.—*Leap over the threshold.*—Their forcibly entering the houses of the poor, and robbing them of their goods. KIMCHI.

10. And it shall come to pass in that day,
 Saith the Lord,
 That there shall be a loud cry
 Of lamentation from the fish-gate,
 And of wailing from the second,
 And of a great destruction from the hills.
11. Howl, ye inhabitants of the mortar-street !
 For all the trading-people are destroyed ;
 All who are laden with money are cut off.
12. And it shall come to pass at that time,
 That I will search Jerusalem with lights,
 And punish the men who are hardened on their
 lees,
 Who say in their hearts :
 The Lord will not do good, nor will He do evil.
13. And their wealth shall become a spoil,
 And their houses a desolation ;
 They may build houses,
 But they shall not inhabit them ;
 And plant vineyards,
 But not drink of the wine.
14. The great day of the Lord is near ;
 It is near, and hasteth greatly ;
 There is the sound of the day of the Lord :
 There the mighty man crieth bitterly.

10.—*Fish-gate*.—From the name it might be inferred that it was situated on the north or the north-east side of the city, that being the direction from which those would arrive who brought fish from Tiberias and the Jordan, and corresponded to what is now called the Damascus Gate. It was from this side, being that which was most accessible, that Jerusalem was attacked by the enemy.—*From the second*.—"City" understood. See Neh. ix., v. 9, where we have in full הָעִיר מִשְׁנֵה הָעִיר *the second city*. Ewald renders the word by *Neustadt*, "Newtown."—*The hills*.—Zion, Moriah, Ophel, and other elevated localities within the walls, occupied by the temple, the royal palace and the houses of the richer portion of the inhabitants.

11.—*The Mortar-street*.—The locality of the bazaars, where the merchants carried on their business.

12.—*Hardened*.—חֲזָק, signifies to contract, become concrete, hard, etc., and strikingly expresses the hardened state of the rich who have settled down in infidelity and Atheism.

15. That day is a day of indignation,
A day of trouble and distress,
A day of desolation and ruin,
A day of darkness and gloom,
A day of clouds and obscurity ;
16. A day of the trumpet and the war-shout,
Against the fortified cities,
And against the lofty towers.
17. And I will bring trouble upon men,
So that they shall walk as the blind ;
Because they have sinned against the Lord,
Their blood shall be poured out as dust,
And their flesh shall be as dung.
18. Neither their silver nor their gold
Shall be able to rescue them
In the day of the Lord's indignation ;
By the fire of His zeal
The whole land shall be consumed :
For a destruction quite sudden will He make
Of all the inhabitants of the land.

CHAPTER II.

1. Collect yourselves, and be ye collected,
O nation without desire !
2. Before the birth of the decree,
—The day passeth away like chaff—
Before there come upon you
The burning anger of the Lord,
Before there come upon you
The anger of the Lord.
3. Seek the Lord, all ye meek of the land,



1.—*Collect yourselves.*—Collect your thoughts, look into your own mind, prove yourselves.—*Without desire.*—For repentance.

2.—The words בְּמִיץ עֶכֶר יוֹם, do not refer to the coming of the period of calamity, but the rapid lapse of the time of repentance. They are introduced parenthetically.

Who have fulfilled all His ordinances ;
 Seek righteousness, seek humility,
 Perhaps ye may be hid
 In the day of the anger of the Lord.

4. For Gaza shall be forsaken,
 And Ashkelon a desolation ;
 Ashdod shall be driven out at noon-day,
 And Ekron shall be rooted up.
5. Woe to the inhabitants of the line of the sea !
 The nation of the Kerethites !
 The word of the Lord is against you ;
 O Canaan, the land of the Philistines,
 I will destroy thee, that no inhabitant shall remain.
6. And the line of the sea shall become
 Places for pens of shepherds,
 And folds for sheep.
7. Yea, the line shall be
 For the remnant of the house of Judah,
 Thereupon shall they feed ;
 In the houses of Ashkelon
 Shall they lie down at even ;
 For the Lord their God will think of them,
 And reverse their captivity.
8. I have heard the reproach of Moab,
 And the revilings of the sons of Ammon,
 Who have reviled My people,
 And made themselves great against their border.



4.—For the cities here specified, see on the parallel prophecy, Amos i., vv. 6—8.—*Noon-day*.—The hottest part of the day, which is generally spent by the Orientals in sleep, and is the least likely time for any military operations to be carried on. See II Sam. iv., v. 5 ; Jer. vi., v. 4, xv., v. 8.

5.—*The line of the sea*.—The *region* or *coast* along the sea-shore, and so called from the custom of using a cord or line in measuring off or dividing a territory.

8—10.—Compare the parallel prophecies against Moab, Is. xv., xvi. ; Jer. xlviii. ; Amos ii., vv. 1—3 ; and against Ammon, Jer. xlix., vv. 1—6 ; Amos i., vv. 13—15.

9. Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord of hosts,
The God of Israel :
Surely Moab shall be as Sodom,
And the sons of Ammon as Gomorrah,
Overgrown with nettles, and salt pits,
And a perpetual desolation ;
The remnant of my people shall plunder them,
And the residue of my nation shall possess them.
10. This shall happen to them for their pride ;
Because they reproached, and made themselves
great,
Against the people of the Lord of hosts.
11. The Lord will be terrible over them,
For He will cause to vanish
All the gods of the earth ;
All the inhabitants of the maritime regions
Shall worship Him—each from his place.
12. Also ye, O ye Cushites !
Shall be slain by My sword.
13. And he will stretch his hand over the north,
And destroy Assyria ;
He will also make Nineveh a desolation,
Dry, like the desert.
14. And flocks shall lie down in the midst of her,
All the wild beasts of the nations ;
Both the pelican and the porcupine
Shall take up their abode in her capitals ;
A voice shall sing in the windows,
Ruin shall be on the thresholds,
For the cedar-work is laid bare.
15. This is the joyful city that dwelt securely,

12.—The prophecy received its fulfilment when Nebuchadnezzar invaded and conquered Egypt, with whose military operations and fate the Ethiopians were more or less mixed up. Jer. xlvii., v. 9.

13—15.—From the remote south into which the prophet had carried his hearers, he turns suddenly back to the north, where there still existed a mighty empire, which must of necessity be overthrown, before the arms of Babylon could reach the countries against which he had denounced God's judgments. This empire was the Assyrian, which

That said in her heart :
 " I am, and besides me there is none."
 How she is become desolate !
 A resting-place for wild beasts !
 Every one that passeth by her will hiss,
 And shake his hand.

CHAPTER III.

1. Woe to the rebellious and polluted,
The oppressing city !
2. She listened not to the voice,
She accepted no correction !
She trusted not in the Lord,
She drew not near to her God.
3. Her princes in her midst
Are roaring lions ;
Her judges are evening wolves ;
They gnaw no bones in the morning.
4. Her prophets are vain-glorious,
Hypocritical men ;
Her priests profane what is sacred,
They do violence to the law.
5. The just Lord is in her midst,

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 was drawing towards its end. By **אֶרְזֵה** is meant the wainscoting and fine carved *cedar-work* with which the walls, ceilings, etc., of the houses were ornamented.  
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1.—*Rebellious*.—**מָרָא**, cognate with **מָרָה**, *to prove refractory, rebel*.

2—4.—*Evening wolves*.—Wolves which come forth from the forests or other lurking places in the evening, and, greedy with hunger, seize or devour during the night whatever animals they fall in with.—The voracious and insatiable cupidity of the judges is further expressed by **לֹא נִרְמָו לְבֹקֶר**, *nothing is craunched in the morning* ; i.e., all is devoured in the night, and not so much as a bone left to be gnawed in the morning.—The priests were equally corrupt. They made no distinction between the holy and profane, and distorted the meaning of the law, when expounding it to the people. Comp. Ezek. xxii., v. 26.

- He doeth no injustice ;
 Every morning He bringeth His justice to light,
 It never faileth ;
 But the unjust knoweth no shame.
6. I have cut off nations ;
 Their corner-stones are laid waste ;
 I have laid their streets in ruins,
 So that no one passeth through ;
 Their cities are destroyed—
 Without a man, without an inhabitant.
7. I said: Only fear Me ;
 Accept correction ;
 That her habitation might not be cut off,
 All that I had decreed concerning her :
 But they rose up early,
 They corrupted all their doings.
8. Nevertheless, wait for me, saith the Lord,
 For the day that I rise up for the prey ;
 For my determination is to assemble the nations,
 To gather the kingdoms ;
 To pour out upon them my fury,
 All the heat of my anger ;
 For by the fire of my jealousy
 The whole earth shall be consumed.
9. For then will I turn to the nations a pure language,
 That they may all invoke the name of the Lord ;
 That they may serve Him with one accord.
10. From beyond the rivers of Cush,

6.—פִּנֵּה is here to be taken in its literal acceptation of *corner stone*, but the ruin or desolation of the building resting upon it is implied.

7.—*To rise early*, is frequently used in the Hebrew Scriptures in a tropical sense, to indicate that a person does anything with preparedness or full purpose of mind.

10.—בִּת־פוֹצִי, *the daughter of my dispersed*, i.e., by a common Hebrew idiom, *My dispersed people*.

- My suppliants, the daughter of my dispersed,
Shall bring my offering.—
11. On that day thou shalt not be ashamed,
On account of all thy doings,
By which thou hast transgressed against Me;
For then will I remove from the midst of thee
Those that rejoice in thy pride;
And thou shalt no more be haughty
On My holy mountain.
 12. And I will leave in the midst of thee
An humble and poor people,
And they shall trust in the name of the Lord.
 13. The residue of Israel shall not do injustice;
They shall not speak lies;
Neither shall a deceitful tongue
Be found in their mouth;
But they shall feed and lie down,
And none shall make them afraid.
 14. Rejoice, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O Israel!
Be joyful and exult with all thy heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!
 15. The Lord hath removed thy punishment;
He hath cleared away thy enemy;
The King of Israel, the Lord,
Is in the midst of thee,
Thou shalt see calamity no more.
 16. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
“Fear thou not;”
To Zion: “Let not thy hands be feeble;”
 17. The Lord thy God is in the midst of thee,
The Mighty One, that will save;
He will rejoice over thee with gladness,

11.—*Not be ashamed.* — The not being ashamed of their sinful practices does not mean their not feeling a compunctious sense of their intrinsic odiousness and demerits, but is expressive of the great change that should take place in their outward condition.

- He will be silent in His love,
 He will exult over thee with a shout of joy.
18. I will gather those that mourn
 Far away from the festive assembly;
 Those that were separated from thee,
 That have borne for thee
 The burden of reproach.
19. Behold! I will deal severely
 With all thine oppressors at that time,
 And will save her that halteth,
 And collect the expelled,
 And make them a praise and a name,
 In every country where they have been put to
 shame.
20. At that time I will bring you back,
 Even at the time when I collect you;
 For I will make you a name and a praise
 Among all the nations of the earth,
 When I reverse your captivity in your sight,
 Saith the Lord.

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17.—*Will be silent.*—יִחְרִישׁ; some propose to read יִחְרִישׁ “He will *renew* his love;” but this verb nowhere occurs in Hiphil, and the conjectural emendation is wholly unnecessary. חָרַשׁ “to be dumb,” *keep silence*, has the same signification in Hiphil, *to be silent*, and is here very appropriately employed to express the non-remembrance of iniquity.

18.—*For thee.*—I read with the Targum and several MSS. עֲלֶיךָ, instead of עֲלֵיךָ.

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HAGGAI.

INTRODUCTION.

It is generally thought that the prophet Haggai was among the Hebrew exiles who returned with Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest from Babylon, in the year n.c. 536, when Cyrus granted them their liberty, and ordered them to be furnished with what was necessary for the restoration of the temple at Jerusalem. His book itself vouches for the fact that he prophesied in the reign of Darius Hystaspis, who ascended the Persian throne n.c. 521. Having been interrupted in building the temple by an interdict which the Samaritans obtained from Smerdis the usurper, the Jews became in some measure indifferent to the work; and when Darius came to the throne, an event which must have deprived the prohibition of all authority, instead of vigorously recommencing their labours, the more influential persons among them pretended that the proper time for rebuilding the temple had not then arrived, and gave their whole attention to the erection of splendid mansions for themselves.

To rouse them from their selfish indifference, Haggai and Zechariah were commissioned, in the second year of Darius, *i.e.* n.c. 520, to deliver to them rousing appeals from God. These appeals had the desired effect, and the work proceeded with vigour.

The book is made up of five messages, which were all delivered, at successive periods, within the short space of three months. They are so exceedingly brief, that they are, not without reason, supposed to be only a summary or epitome of the original discourses.

The style of Haggai is not distinguished by any peculiar excellence; yet he is not destitute of pathos and vehemence, when reproving his countrymen for their negligence, and exhorting them to the performance of duty. Certain portions of the book are purely historical; and the rest, though exhibiting more or less the parallelism of members which characterises the usual prophetic style, are but faintly rhythmical.

HAGGAI.

CHAPTER I.

1. In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord was communicated through Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Jehosedech, the high priest, saying:
2. Thus saith the Lord of hosts:
This people have said: "The time is not come,
The time for the Lord's house to be built."
3. Yea, the word of the Lord was communicated through Haggai the prophet, saying:
4. Is it time for you, O ye,
To dwell in your wainscoted houses,
While this house lieth in ruins?
5. Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts:
Consider your ways.

1.—*Zerubbabel*.—His Chaldee name was Sheshbazzar, שִׁשְׁבַּצָר, Ezra i., v. 8; he was the grandson (יָד is used by Haggai in its more extended signification) of Shealtiel, of the royal house of David, I Chron. iii., vv. 9-19. Cyrus committed to his care the sacred vessels of the temple, and appointed him governor of the colony which returned to Judea. The term מִשְׁכָּל, *prefect* or *governor*, by which he is designated, is applied to persons bearing rule in provinces or divisions of the Persian empire of less extent and importance than satrapies.—Joshua the high priest is repeatedly mentioned in the book of Zechariah, as presiding over the Jewish affairs at the same time with Zerubbabel.

4.—Repeating the word מָל, *time*, which he has employed twice, verse 2, the prophet makes an appeal full of point and cogency to those whom he addresses.

6. Ye have sown much, but brought in little :
 Ye have eaten, but not enough ;
 Ye have drunk, but not to the full ;
 Ye have put on clothing, but none is warm :
 And he that earneth wages, earneth them
 To put them into a purse with holes.
7. Thus saith the Lord of hosts :
 Consider your ways.
8. Go up to the mountain and bring wood,
 And build the house, that I may take pleasure in
 it,
 And be glorified, saith the Lord.
9. Ye looked for much, but, behold ! little ;
 And when ye brought it home, I blew upon it,
 Wherefore ? saith the Lord of hosts.
 Because of My house that lieth in ruins,
 While ye run each to his own house.
10. Therefore, it is on your account
 The heavens withhold the dew,
 And the earth withholdeth her produce.
11. And I have called for drought,

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6.—הָבֵא, אָכַל, שָׁתוּ, and לָבוֹשׁ are historical infinitives, which carry forward the force of the finite form in וַיִּרְעִמֻם at the commencement of the verse, and, at the same time, give a greater degree of prominence to the actions which they express.—*Purse with holes*.—The necessities of life were already become so dear, that those who wrought for day's wages parted with all that they earned, as if they had put them into a bag or purse with holes.

8.—*Bring wood*.—They are called to provide wood only, on account of the time which would be necessary to procure the article from Lebanon, since it required first to be hewn down, and afterwards transported by sea to Joppa.

10.—עַלֵיכֶם is not to be referred to the heavens, and so rendered *over you*, but *on your account, for your sake*. The meaning is, on account of your neglecting to build the temple.

11.—The lxx., supposing it to be incongruous to speak of bringing a drought upon *man and beast*, read חֶרֶב, sword instead of חֶרֶב, drought. What the prophet threatens is a universal drought, the effects of which would specially be experienced by living creatures.

Upon the land, and upon the mountains,  
 Upon the grain, and upon the new wine,  
 Upon the oil, and upon what the ground bringeth  
 forth.

Upon man and upon beast,  
 And upon all the labour of the hands.

12. Then Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua, the son of Jehosedech the high priest, and all the residue of the people, hearkened to the voice of the Lord their God, and to the words of Haggai the prophet, as the Lord their God had sent him. And the people feared the Lord.
13. Then spake Haggai the messenger of the Lord, by the Lord's message unto the people :  
 I am with you, saith the Lord.
14. And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and the spirit of Joshua, the son of Jehosedech the high priest, and the spirit of all the rest of the people, and they came and did work on the house of the Lord
15. of hosts, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

## CHAPTER II.

1. In the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the Lord was communicated through Haggai the prophet, saying :
2. Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel,

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15.—From the date here assigned it appears that most of the month elapsed before the work was fairly undertaken.

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1—2.—This oracle was delivered nearly a month after the rebuilding of the temple had commenced, and was evidently designed to remove the despondency in which some of the people indulged, and to animate them to prosecute the work.



the governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Jehosedech, the high priest, and the rest of the people, saying :

3. Who is there yet left among you,  
That saw this house in its former glory ?  
And how do ye see it now ?  
Is it not, in comparison with it,  
As nothing in your eyes ?
4. Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel ! saith the Lord ;  
And be strong, O Joshua !  
Son of Jehosedech, the high priest ;  
Be ye strong also, all ye people of the land !  
Saith the Lord of hosts, and work :  
For I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts.
5. The covenant which I made with you,  
When ye went forth out of Egypt,  
So will My spirit remain among you :  
Fear not.
6. For thus saith the Lord of hosts :  
Yet one thing more, it is but little,  
And I will shake heaven and earth,  
And the sea and the dry land.
7. Yea, I will shake all the nations,  
That the most lovely of all people may come,  
And I will fill this house with glory,  
Saith the Lord of hosts.
8. Mine is the silver, and mine is the gold,  
Saith the Lord of hosts.

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3.—It appears from Ezra iii., v. 10, that there were some present at the laying of the foundation of the second temple, who had seen the first. To such of them as were still alive, few as they must have been, Haggai appeals respecting the disparity between the two, in regard to the rough and unpromising appearance of the new structure, contrasted with the elegant and splendid aspect of that of Solomon, previous to its destruction by the Chaldeans.

5.—*The covenant*.—"In accordance with" the covenant. Ewald would supply זָכוֹר, *remember*. Hengstenberg supplies it in a parenthesis.

9. The glory of this latter house  
Shall be greater than that of the former,  
Saith the Lord of hosts.  
And in this place I will give peace,  
Saith the Lord of hosts.
10. On the twenty-fourth of the ninth month, in  
the second year of Darius, the word of the  
Lord was communicated through Haggai the  
prophet, saying: Thus saith the Lord of hosts:
11. Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying:
12. If any one should carry sacred flesh in the  
skirt of his garment, and touch with his skirt  
bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any food,  
shall it become holy? And the priests an-  
swered and said, No. Then said Haggai: If  
any one who is unclean on account of a dead  
body, should touch any of these, shall it be  
unclean? And the priests answered and said,
14. It shall be unclean. Then Haggai continued,  
and said:  
So is this people, and so is this nation before me,  
saith the Lord;  
And so are all the works of their hands;  
And what they offer there is unclean.
15. And now consider, I beseech you,

10.—This prophecy was delivered nearly two months later than that contained in the preceding verses of the chapter.

11—13.—To convince his countrymen of the impossibility of their conduct being well-pleasing to God, and of their obtaining His blessing, while in any one point they neglected to comply with His will, the prophet directs them to consult the priests on two legal questions; the one relative to the communication of ceremonial sanctity to any object, by its having been brought into contact with what has been sanctified; and the other, respecting the communication of ceremonial impurity by one who was himself impure. The former was denied, the latter affirmed. Whatever they might otherwise rightly perform, would not compensate for their neglect in building the temple.

15.—*Backward*.—מַעֲלָה, a substantive, with the local ה, used adverbially. Properly it signifies *upward*; but used, as here, of time, it means *backwards*.

- From this day and backward,  
Before one stone was laid upon another  
In the temple of the Lord.
16. Since these days were,  
One came to a heap of twenty sheaves,  
And there were but ten;  
One came to the vat to draw fifty purahs,  
And there were but twenty.
17. I smote you with blight, mildew, and hail,  
In all the labours of your hands;  
Yet ye turned not to me,  
Saith the Lord.
18. Consider, I beseech you,  
From this day and backward,  
From the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month,  
From the day when the temple of the Lord was  
founded,  
Consider!
19. Is the seed still in the granary?  
And as yet the vine, and the fig-tree,  
And the pomegranate,  
And the olive have borne nothing;  
But from this day I will bestow the blessing.
20. And the word of the Lord was communicated a  
second time to Haggai on the twenty-fourth
21. day of the month, saying: Speak to Zerubba-  
bel, the governor of Judah, saying:  
I will shake heaven and earth;
22. I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms,

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16.—*Purahs*.—פִּיטָה, which is used for the wine-press itself, Isa. lxxiii., v. 3, is here employed to denote a liquid measure in which the wine was drawn out. The quantity being unknown, I have retained the original word.

19.—To the question put at the beginning of the verse, a negative is to be given. The seed was no longer in the granary. It had been sown in the course of the month, and there were no signs of its springing up any more than there were of the produce of the fruit-trees. But now that they were diligently engaged in building the temple, they might calculate upon a plenteous one.

I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of
the nations,

And overthrow the chariots

And those who ride in them ;

The horses, and the riders shall come down,

Each by the sword of another.

23. On that day, saith the Lord of hosts,

I will take thee, O Zerubbabel !

The son of Shealtiel,

My servant, saith the Lord,

And will place thee as a signet ;

For thee I have chosen,

Saith the Lord of hosts.



23.—*As a signet.*—Comp. Song viii., v. 6 ; Jer. xxii., v. 24.



Z E C H A R I A H.

INTRODUCTION.

Zechariah was of a sacerdotal family. His father, Borechia, was the son of Iddo, one of the priests who returned with Zerubbabel and Joshua from Babylon, Neh. xii., v. 4. When he is said to have been the son of Iddo, Ezra v., v. 1 ; vi., v. 14, the word יְדִיד is used, according to a common Hebrew idiom, in the sense of grandson. He must have been born in Babylonia, and been young, rather than otherwise, at the time of his arrival in Judea. He was contemporary with Haggai, and, like him, received his prophetic commission in the second year of Darius Hytaspis, B.C. 520, only the latter began his ministry two months earlier. Both prophets were employed in encouraging Zerubbabel and Joshua to carry forward the building of the temple, which had been intermitted through the worldly spirit of the returned exiles.

The authenticity of the last six chapters has been, and still is, strongly contested. Not only has it been denied to be the production of Zechariah, but it has been broken up into fragments, the independent authorship of which has been attributed to as many anonymous authors.

The principal objection is taken to the language and character of the materials, as being very different from those which are found to distinguish what is universally allowed to have been written by Zechariah. To this, however, it has been replied, that granting such to be the case, there may have elapsed a long period of time between the composition of the former and latter portions of the book, during which any observable change in the style of the prophet might have taken place. It is evident, from there being no reference whatever in the chapters in question to the completion of the temple and the restoration of the Jewish affairs after the captivity, that, if they had not been written previously, they must have been composed long after these events had become matter of history, and in circumstances altogether different from those which occupied the attention of the prophet at the commencement of his ministry.

That these chapters were written long before, and, indeed, during the existence of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, is a position maintained by most of those who dispute their authenticity ; but it is based upon too feeble and precarious a foundation to recommend it to the adoption of any who will impartially examine into all the circumstances of the case. The mere mention of Judah and Ephraim, upon which such stress is laid, can yield it no real support. Not the smallest hint is anywhere dropped which would lead us to infer the

existence, at the time, of a separate political or religious establishment in the northern part of Palestine; nor is there anything, but the contrary, to induce the conclusion that a king reigned in Judah in the days of the author. That Ephraim should be spoken of as existing after the captivity cannot be matter of surprise, when it is considered that a very large, if not the larger, portion of the ten tribes availed themselves of the liberty granted by the Persians to the Jews in Babylon, and likewise returned to the land of their fathers. This view of the subject is confirmed by the application of the term "Israel" to all the tribes ch. xii., v. 1, just as it is used in the identical formula, Mal. i., v. 1. (Comp. Mal. ii., vv. 11-12; iii., v. 6.) The few references to a return relate to those Jews who were in a state of banishment or slavery under the Græco-Syrian and Græco-Egyptian kings. The historical circumstances connected with the Egyptian expedition of Alexander are so strongly marked in the prophetic announcements, that they cannot without violence be identified with any previous events. The absence, too, of the slightest allusion to the Babylonian captivity, either in the way of threatening or warning, while the prophet minutely describes the character of the Jewish rulers, and the condition of the Jewish people, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the consequent fate of that people, goes convincingly to show that the captivity must have taken place, and that the whole of this portion of the book refers to times future to those in which he flourished. So strongly, indeed, has this feature of the case presented itself to Eichhorn, and other sharp-sighted critics, that, rejecting, as their neology compelled them to do, all ideas of actual prophecy, they scrupled not to affirm that the disputed chapters must have been composed in the days of Alexander, Antiochus Epiphanes, or Hyrcanus I. It also deserves notice that no reference whatever is made to the existence of royal government among the Jews at the time the author wrote, or to any circumstances in the history of that people, previous to the captivity.

When, therefore, the difference both in regard to time and subject-matter are taken into consideration, it must be regarded as sufficient to account for any difference of style that may be detected. It is, however, after all, a question whether there really does exist such a difference in this respect, as that to which it has become so fashionable to appeal. Be it that the introductory formulæ which occur in the first eight chapters do not occur in the last six, the objection, if fully carried out, would go in like manner to dismember the book of Amos, and assign its composition at least to *three* different authors. The first two chapters of that prophet, it may be alleged, cannot have been written by the same person that wrote the three which follow, since in the former every prediction is ushered in by the marked formula *כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה*, "thus saith the Lord," whereas in the latter no such formula occurs, but another equally marked, *שִׁמְעוּ אֶת הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה*, "Hear ye this word." And upon the same principle the seventh and eight chapters must have come from the pen of a third writer, since the distinguishing formula there is *כֹּה הִרְאֵנִי יְהוָה*, "Thus hath the Lord showed me."

The very peculiar character of the first six chapters of Zechariah is such as to exclude all comparison of any other portion with it, while

the more adorned and poetical style of the concluding chapters, which is so admirably adapted to the subjects treated of, ought equally to be regarded as exempting them from the category of comparison. In these no dates were requisite, though they were in the former, in which they occupy their appropriate place in necessary connection with the events which transpired at the time. With respect to the titles, chapter ix., v. 1, and xii., v. 1, they are precisely such as might be expected to mark the strictly prophetic matter to which they are prefixed. The exactly parallel title, Malachi i., v. 1, naturally suggests the idea, that they belong to a common period, especially as nothing analogous is found in any of the earlier prophets.

On the whole, I cannot but regard the objections to the authenticity of the disputed chapters as the offspring either of a holy jealousy for the honour of the evangelist Matthew, who attributes chapter xi., vv. 12-13, to Jeremiah, and not to Zechariah (see comment on the passage), or of a spirit of wanton and unbridled hypercriticism, which would unsettle everything, in order to satisfy the claims of certain favourite principles of interpretation that may happen to be in vogue.

In point of style, our prophet varies, according to the nature of his subjects, and the manner in which they were presented to his mind. He now expresses himself in simple conversational prose, now in poetry. At one time he abounds in the language of symbols; at another in that of direct prophetic announcement. His symbols are, for the most part, enigmatical, and require the explanations which accompany them. His prose resembles most that of Ezekiel; it is diffuse, uniform, and repetitious. His prophetic poetry possesses much of the elevation and dignity to be found in the earlier prophets, with whose writings he appears to have been familiar; only his rhythmus is sometimes harsh and unequal, while his parallelisms are destitute of that symmetry and finish which form some of the principal beauties of Hebrew poetry.

Z E C H A R I A H.



CHAPTER I.

1. In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord was communicated to Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, saying:
2. The Lord has been greatly displeased with your fathers.
3. Say therefore unto them,
Thus saith the Lord of hosts :
Return unto me, saith the Lord of hosts,
And I will return unto you,
Saith the Lord of hosts.
4. Be ye not like your fathers,
To whom the former prophets proclaimed,
Saying: Thus saith the Lord of hosts :
Turn now from your evil ways,
And from your evil practices ;
But they did not hearken,
Nor listen unto me, saith the Lord.
5. Your fathers—where are they ?
And the prophets—could they live for ever ?



3.—The ו in **וְאָמַרְתָּ** is not merely continuative, but argumentative, and inferential. The phrase **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת**, *Lord of hosts*, is of unusually frequent occurrence in the eight first chapters of this book, and in that of Haggai, written about the same time.

4.—The *prophets* here referred to are those who lived before the captivity, and the *fathers* are those who lived in their time. The appropriation of the phrase **נְבִיאִים רְאִשׁוֹנִים**, *the former prophets*, as a designation of the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, is of much later date.

6. But My words, and My decrees,
Which I gave in charge to My servants the prophets,

Did they not overtake your fathers ?

So that they turned and said :

"According as the Lord of hosts purposed to do unto us,

According to our ways,

And according to our practices,

So hath He dealt with us."

7. On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord was communicated to Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo, the prophet, saying :

8. I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtles in the shade, and behind him were red, bay and

9. white horses. Then I said, What are these, my lord ? And the angel who spake with me, said to me, I will show thee what these are.

10. And the man that stood among the myrtles answered and said, These are those whom the

11. Lord hath sent to traverse the earth. And they answered the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtles, and said, We have traversed the earth, and, behold ! all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.

12. Then the angel of the Lord commenced and said : O Lord of hosts ! how long yet wilt Thou not compassionate Jerusalem and the

7.—*Shebat*.—The eleventh month of the Jewish year. Like other names of the months, the word is Chaldee. The resemblance of the word to the Hebrew שֶׁבֶט, *a shoot, rod, staff*, suggests the idea of the month being so called because it was that in which the trees began to put forth their shoots or sprouts.

8.—*In the shade*.—From צֶלֶל, *to be shaded, darkened*.

12.—*Commenced*.—עָנָה, signifies *to commence*, or *proceed*, to speak, as well as *to answer*.

- cities of Judah, with which Thou hast been
 13. angry these seventy years? And the Lord
 answered the angel who spake with me with
 14. good and comforting words. And the angel
 who spake with me said to me, Proclaim thou,
 saying :
 Thus saith the Lord of hosts :
 I am zealous for Jerusalem,
 And for Zion with great zeal.
 15. And I am very greatly displeased
 With the nations that are at ease ;
 Because I was a little displeased,
 And they helped forward the affliction.
 16. Wherefore, thus saith the Lord :
 I have returned to Jerusalem in compassion ;
 My house shall be rebuilt in it,
 Saith the Lord of hosts,
 And a line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem.
 17. Proclaim again, saying,
 Thus saith the Lord of hosts :
 My cities shall again overflow with prosperity ;
 And the Lord will again comfort Zion,
 And make choice again of Jerusalem.

15.—*Displeased*.—With Zion. The enemies of the Jews had not simply executed the Divine indignation against that people, but they had done it wantonly. Such seems to be the force of עָזְרוּ לְרָעָה.

16.—The building of the temple had been begun, but it still lay for the most part in ruins, and was not finished till the sixth year of Darius. See Ezra vi., v. 15.

17.—Few as were the inhabitants of Judea at the time of the vision, the land was speedily re-occupied. Josephus informs us that overflowing with numbers, Jerusalem gradually crept beyond its walls, till a fourth hill, called Bezetha, was covered with habitations.

CHAPTER II.

1. Then I lifted up my eyes, and looked, and, be-
2. hold! four horns. And I said to the angel who spake with me, What are these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have
3. dispersed Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And
4. the Lord showed me four workmen. Then I said, What are these coming to do? And He spake, saying, These are the horns which have dispersed Judah, so that no man lifted up his head; but these are come to terrify them, to throw down the horns of the nations, which raised the horn against the land of Judah to disperse it.
5. Then I lifted up my eyes, and looked, and, behold! a man with a measuring line in his hand.
6. And I said: Whither art thou going? And he said to me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is her breadth, and what is her length.
7. And, behold! the angel who spake with me went forth, and another angel came forth to meet him. And he said to him, Run, speak to this young man, saying:
8. Without walls shall Jerusalem be inhabited,

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1.—*Four horns*.—קַרְנִים, a horn, is the symbol of a kingdom, or political power, the figure being taken from bulls, and other horned animals having their strength in their horns.

2.—“*Jerusalem*” is added to render the description more emphatic, being the metropolis, the site of the temple, and the royal residence.

3.—*Workmen*.—חַרְשֵׁים, *workmen* in iron, brass, stone, or wood.

4.—*To throw down*.—יָרֶה, signifies to *throw, cast, stretch*, the particular manner of which is to be determined by the context.

8.—*Run*.—The verb רוץ, implies the necessity of dispatch, which could only have been occasioned by the intended procedure of the measurer. He is arrested in his progress, and virtually told that the former dimensions of the city would be totally inadequate to contain the number of its inhabitants.

Because of the multitude of men and cattle in the midst of her.

9. But—I will be to her, saith the Lord,  
A wall of fire around,  
And will be the glory in the midst of her.
10. Up! up! flee from the north country,  
Saith the Lord,  
For as the four winds of heaven  
Have I spread you abroad, saith the Lord.
11. Up, Zion! escape! thou that dwellest  
With the daughter of Babylon.
12. For thus saith the Lord of hosts:  
For the sake of your glory He hath sent me to  
the nations which have spoiled you;  
For whoever toucheth you,  
Toucheth the pupil of His eye.
13. For, behold! I will shake my fist at them,  
And they shall be a spoil to their slaves,  
And ye shall know that the Lord of hosts has  
sent me.
14. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion!  
For, behold! I am coming,  
And I will dwell in the midst of thee,  
Saith the Lord.
15. And many nations will join themselves to the  
Lord on that day,  
And shall become My people;  
And I will dwell in the midst of thee,  
And thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts has  
sent me unto thee.
16. And the Lord will take Judah  
As His inheritance in the holy land;  
And will again make choice of Jerusalem.

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11.—By “Zion” are meant the inhabitants of Jerusalem at that time still in Babylon.

13.—*Their slaves*.—By עֲבָדֵיהֶם, *their slaves*, are meant the Jews, whom the nations, either by capture or purchase, had brought into a state of slavery.—*Ye shall know*.—יָדַע, here, and in verse 15, signifies, as frequently, *to know by experience*.

17. Be silent, all flesh ! before the Lord,
For He is roused from His holy habitation.

CHAPTER III.

1. And he showed me Joshua, the high priest,
standing before the angel of the Lord, and
Satan standing at his right hand to oppose
him.
2. And the Lord said to Satan,
The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan !
Yea, the Lord rebuke thee,
That hath chosen Jerusalem ;
Is not this a brand snatched from the fire ?
3. Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments,
4. and was standing before the angel. And he
commenced and spake to those that stood be-
fore him, saying, Remove the filthy garments
from him. And he said to him, Behold !

1.--As the phrase עֹמֵד לְפָנַי, *to stand before*, is sometimes used of appearing before a judge (Numb. xxxv., v. 12 ; Deut. xix, v. 17 ; I Kings iii., v. 16 ;) it has been inferred that we have here the representation of a judicial transaction, an exegesis which is supposed to derive confirmation from the circumstance of Satan (or accuser) being mentioned in the following verse. But as the person here described is the high priest, and the phrase in question is that which is appropriated to express the position of the priests when ministering to God (Deut. x., v. 8 ; II Chron. xix., v. 11 ; Ezek. xliv., v. 15), it is more natural to conclude that Joshua is here represented as having entered the new temple which was in the course of erection, and taken his position in front of the altar before the holy of holies. The high priest not only entered the most sacred place once a year on the day of atonement, but was authorised to perform all the duties of the ordinary priests ; so that he may here be conceived as about to offer sacrifices for the people when he was opposed by Satan. That the altar of burnt offering was erected before the building of the temple was proceeded with, is clear, from Ezra iii., vv. 2, 3, 6, 7.

4.—צִוְאָה, *filth*, is used metaphorically to denote the moral pollution contracted by sin. See Prov. xxx., v. 12 ; Is. iv., v. 4. He is represented as appearing in the squalid garments in which he had returned from Babylon, and as having restored to him the gorgeous dress of the high priest.—מִחֶלְצוֹת, *costly, festive garments*, such as were worn on special occasions.

- I have caused thine iniquity to pass away from thee, and I will clothe thee with festive garments. He then said, Let them place a clean mitre upon his head. And they placed the clean mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments, and the angel of the Lord stood by. And the angel of the Lord forewarned Joshua, saying :
7. Thus saith the Lord of hosts :
If thou walk in my ways,
And if thou wilt observe my charge,
Then thou shalt both judge my house,
And keep my courts;
And I will give thee places to walk
Among these that stand by.
8. Hear now, O Joshua ! the high priest,
Thou and thy companions that sit before thee ;
For distinguished men are they ;
For, behold ! I will bring my servant Zemach.
9. For, behold ! the stone which I have laid before Joshua,
Upon the one stone shall be seven eyes :
Behold ! I will engrave thereon its inscription,
Saith the Lord of hosts :
And I will remove the punishment of that land
in one day.
10. On that day, saith the Lord of hosts,
Ye shall each invite his neighbour,
Under the vine, and under the fig-tree.

5.—*He then said.*—So the Targum. This is the right reading. Ours introduces the prophet as taking a part in the transactions exhibited in the vision, which is altogether foreign to the position he occupied.

8.—My servant Zemach—Zerubbabel.

9.—*The punishment.*—יִצְיָ is to be understood, not of iniquity, but the *punishment* of iniquity. Thus “the iniquity” of Sodom, Gen. xix., v. 15, was the punishment to be inflicted upon it; and that of Babylon, Jer. li., v. 6, the same.

CHAPTER IV.

1. And the angel that spake with me came back again, and waked me up, like one that is
2. wakened out of his sleep. And he said unto me, What dost thou see? And I said, I see, and behold! a candlestick all of gold, and its bowl upon the top of it, and its seven lamps upon it, and seven pipes to the lamps which
3. are upon the top of it. And two olive-trees beside it, one on the right side of the bowl,
4. and one on the left side of it. And I addressed myself further to the angel who spake with me, saying, What are these, my lord? And the angel who spake with me answered and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these are?
6. And I said, No, my lord. And he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, saying:
Not by might, nor by power,
But by My spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.
7. Who art thou, O great mountain?
Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain:
And he shall bring forth the head stone,
With shouts of Grace! Grace to it!

1.—The prophet had become so absorbed in the contemplation of the preceding vision, that he required to be roused, as in the case of a person in profound sleep.

2.—שִׁבְעָה וְשִׁבְעָה.—The translators of the A.V. and many others remove the one seven and place it before "lamps"; but such construction is altogether unwarranted. I have not the least doubt that the former שִׁבְעָה is an interpolation, which has found its way into some MS., and been copied into all the rest.

6.—From the purport of the message which the prophet was to deliver to Zerubbabel, it may be inferred that he was labouring under despondency, produced by the consideration of the powerful opposition with which he had to contend, the greatness of the undertaking in which he had embarked, and the inadequacy of the human means which he had at his disposal.

8. And the word of the Lord was communicated
9. unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands shall finish it: and ye shall know that
10. the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you. For whoever even despised the day of its small beginning, yet they will rejoice when they see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel, with those seven; they are the eyes of the Lord, which hold a survey through all the earth.
11. Then I proceeded, and said to him, What are these two olive-trees on the right side of the
12. candlestick, and on the left of it? And I proceeded a second time, and said to him, What are these two olive-branches which are close by the two golden pipes, which empty out of
13. themselves the golden liquid? And he spake to me, saying, Knowest thou not what these
14. are? And I said, No, my lord. Then he said, These are the two anointed ones, that stand before the Lord of the whole earth.

CHAPTER V.

1. And I again lifted up my eyes, and looked, and,
2. behold! a flying roll. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I see a flying

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11, 12.—It is not a little remarkable that the prophet had to put the question *three* times respecting the two olive-trees, before he received any reply; first verse 4; a second time verse 11; and a third time verse 12. The question is varied each time, and becomes at last minute and particular. The reason seems to be, that it could scarcely be conceived possible for him not to understand their reference to the two most remarkable persons with whom he was conversant, Joshua and Zerubbabel.

14.—*Anointed ones*.—Joshua and Zerubbabel.

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1.—*A flying roll*.—The ancients wrote upon the inner bark of trees, which was rolled up for the sake of convenience, and for the better preservation of the writing. Mistaking מְגִלָּה for מִגְלָל, the lxx. translated it a *scythe*!

- roll, the length of which is twenty cubits, and
3. the breadth of it ten cubits. And he said to me, This is the curse which goeth forth over the face of the whole earth; for every one that stealeth shall be cleared away on this side, according to it, and every one that sweareth shall be cleared away on that side, according
 4. to it. I bring it forth, saith the Lord of hosts, and it shall enter the house of him that stealeth, and the house of him that sweareth falsely by My name; and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and destroy it, with its timber and its stones.
 5. Then the angel who spake with me came forth, and said to me, Raise thine eyes, now, and
 6. look what is this that cometh forth? And I said, What is it? And he said, This is an ephah that cometh forth. He said, moreover, This is their appearance in all the
 7. land. And, behold! a round piece of lead, and there was a woman sitting in the midst of the
 8. ephah. And he said, This is the wickedness. And he threw her down in the midst of the ephah, and threw the weight of lead on the

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2.—The roll here described was more than ten yards in length, by upwards of five in breadth.

3.—An individual example of transgression is selected from each of the two tables of the law; הַנֶּגֶב, *he who stealeth*, standing for those who break the rule of duty in regard to their neighbour, and הַנִּשְׁבַּע, *he who sweareth*, for those who are guilty of a violation of such duties as have immediate reference to God. כְּמוֹתָהּ—*according to it*, equivalent to כְּכַתּוּב, *as it is written*.

7.—*A round piece*.—כָּכָר, contracted from כִּרְכָר, *what is round*, or *globular*, from כָּרַר, *to go round*, was the heaviest weight in use among the Hebrews, being equal to 3,000 shekels, or, according to Jahn, 125 pounds, English Troy weight.

8.—By רִשְׁעָה in this place is meant idolatry, which was the most flagrant kind of wickedness with respect to God, and the fruitful parent of every other species of iniquity.

9. mouth of it. Then I raised my eyes and looked, and, behold! two women came forth, having the wind in their wings, for they had wings like the wings of a stork; and they bore away the ephah between earth and heaven.
10. Then I said to the angel who spake with me,
11. Whither are these conveying the ephah? And he said, To build for it a house in the land of Shinar; for it shall be set up, and placed there on its own base.

## CHAPTER VI.

1. And I raised my eyes again, and looked, and behold! four chariots came forth from between two mountains, and the mountains were mountains of copper. In the first chariot were red horses,
2. and in the second chariot black horses; and in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot piebald grey horses. I then proceeded and said to the angel who spake with me, What are these, my lord? And the angel answered and said to me, These are the four spirits of heaven, coming forth from presenting themselves before the Lord of the whole earth.
6. That and the black horses in it go forth into the north country; and the white go forth to the west of them; and the piebald go forth
7. to the south country. And the greys went

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 11.—*The land of Shinar.*—The Targum מְרִינָה בָּבֶל, and so the lxx.

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 1.—*Mountains of copper.*—Solid, strong, and durable mountains, such as those in which copper and other metals are ordinarily found. Comp. Jer. i., v. 18.

6.—It is remarkable that the *red-coloured horses*, which had been introduced into the vision, verse 2, are entirely passed over. Perhaps we should read in verse 7, אֲרָמִים instead of אֲמָצִים.—*The north country.*—*Babylon.* The phrase אֶל־אַחֲרֵיהֶם, literally means *behind them*, but geographically, *to the west of them*.

- forth, and sought to traverse the land ; and he said, Go, traverse the land. So they traversed the land. Then he summoned me, and said to me, See, those that went to the north country have appeased my anger in the north country.
8. the land. Then he summoned me, and said to me, See, those that went to the north country have appeased my anger in the north country.
9. And the word of the Lord was communicated to me, saying : Take from the exiles, from Heldai, from Tobijah, and from Jedaiah, and thou shalt come on that day, and go into the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah, whither they have arrived from Babylon. Yea, take silver and gold, and make crowns, and place them upon the head of Joshua, the son of Jehosedech, the high priest ; and speak to him, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, saying : Behold a man, Zemach is his name, And under him there shall be growth ; And he shall build the temple of the Lord.
13. Yea, he shall build the temple of the Lord ; And he shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule upon his throne ; And a priest shall be upon his throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both.
14. And the crowns shall be for Helem, and for To-

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8.—*Appeased my anger.*—That among other significations רָנַח has that of *anger*, see Judg. viii., v. 3 ; Eccles. x., v. 4 ; Is. xxxiii., v. 11. The phrase הִנִּיחַ רָנַח is equivalent to הִנִּיחַ חֲסָמָה, Ezek. vi., v. 13 ; xvi., v. 42 ; xxiv., v. 13.

10.—The infinitive לָקוּחַ, at the beginning of the 10th verse, is to be taken in connection with the finite form of the same verb at the beginning of the 11th, both having בָּסָף וְזָהָב for their object. The persons named appear to have formed a deputation from the *captives* still remaining in Babylon, who had sent them with contributions in gold and silver to help forward the building of the temple at Jerusalem. These deputies had deposited their gifts in the house of Josiah, to which the prophet is commanded to repair and take what was necessary for making the crowns which were to be placed on the head of the high priest. The language of Zechariah here is more heavy and verbose than usual.

14.—*Helem* is, in all probability, the same as *Heldai*, verse 10, and *Heen* another name of *Josiah*, there also mentioned.

15. bijah, and for Jedaiah, and for Hen, the son of Zephaniah, as a memorial in the temple of the Lord. And those who are far off shall come and build on the temple of the Lord; and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to pass if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God.

## CHAPTER VII.

1. And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Darius, that the word of the Lord was communicated to Zechariah on the fourth day of
2. the ninth month, which is Kislev; when they had sent unto Beth-el, Sherezer, Regem-melech and his men, to make entreaty before the Lord,
3. And to say to the priests which were in the house of the Lord of hosts, and to the prophets, saying: Shall I weep in the fifth month, shall I abstain, as I have done these many years?
4. Then the word of the Lord of hosts was com-
5. municated unto me, saying: Speak to all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and in the seventh month, even those seventy years,



2.—*Unto Beth-el.*—Supply אל.

3.—*Shall I weep.*—The question related to the continuance of the fast in the *fifth* month, which had been instituted to commemorate the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans.—*Abstain.*—From food.

5, 6.—Though the question had been proposed by the leading men of a single city only, yet the prophet was directed to address the Divine reply to *all* the inhabitants of the land, the priests not excepted. In הַצֹּם צִחְתִּי אֲנִי there is a double idiom which renders it peculiarly emphatic; comp. Gen. xxvii., v. 34, בְּרִכְתִּי נָם אֲנִי. The fast in the *seventh* month was in commemoration of the murder of Gedaliah. See II Kings xxv., vv. 25-26; Jer. xli., vv. 1-3.

6. was it at all for me that ye fasted? And when ye ate, and when ye drank, was it not ye that
7. ate, and ye that drank? Are not these the words which the Lord proclaimed by the former prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, with her cities around her, when both the south and the plain were inhabited?
8. And the word of the Lord was communicated to
9. Zechariah, saying, Thus spake the Lord of hosts, saying :  
Execute true justice,  
And show kindness and mercy one to another.
10. Oppress not the widow and the orphan,  
The stranger or the poor ;  
And think not in your heart of the injury  
Which one hath done to another.
11. But they refused to attend,  
And turned their back rebelliously ;  
And stopped their ears,  
So as not to hear.
12. They made their heart an adamant,  
So as not to hear the law,  
Nor the words which the Lord sent by His spirit  
through the former prophets ;  
Wherefore there was a great anger  
From the Lord of hosts.
13. And it came to pass,  
When He called, and they would not hear,  
So they called, and I would not hear,  
Saith the Lord of hosts,
14. But tossed them among all the nations  
Which they knew not,  
And the land was desolate after them,

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7.—*South—plain.*—The southern and western parts of Judah.

10.—Though שׂאֵי intervenes between רָעַת and אֶרְצָהּ, they are to be regarded as in construction. Comp. Isaiah xix., v. 8. No one was to harbour any feelings of resentment against another for an injury he might have done him.

Without any one to pass through it forward or backward ;

For they had made a pleasant land a desolation.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. And the word of the Lord of hosts was com-
2. municated to me, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts :
I have been zealous for Zion with great zeal,
Yea, with great indignation have I been zealous for her.
3. Thus saith the Lord, I return to Zion,
And will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem ;
And Jerusalem shall be called, The city of truth,
And the mountain of the Lord of hosts, The holy mountain.
4. Thus saith the Lord of hosts :
Aged men and aged women shall again be sitting in the streets of Jerusalem,
Each man with his staff in his hand for very age ;
5. And the streets of the city shall be filled
With boys and girls, playing in her streets.
6. Thus saith the Lord of hosts :
Though it should be wonderful in the eyes
Of this people in those days,

1.—Before לְאֵלֶי the word אֵלַי, *to me*, is found in thirty-three Hebrew MSS.; it is the reading of the Soncín., Brixian, and Complutensian editions, and is supported by the Syr. and Targum.

4, 5.—These verses beautifully depict the security and happiness of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The idea conveyed by מְשַׁחֲקִים in such connection is exquisite. What can be more gratifying to the uncorrupted simplicity of human feelings, than to witness a number of young children enjoying their innocent gambols? For a contrary state of things, see Jer. vi., v. 11; ix., v. 21.

6.—*In those days*.—At the time when I fulfil my promise. To justify the rendering of the A.V. “in *these* days,” the Hebrew should have been בַּיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה. See verse 9.

- Should it also be wonderful in My eyes ?
 Saith the Lord of hosts.
7. Thus saith the Lord of hosts :
 I will deliver My people
 From the land of the rising,
 And from the land of the setting of the sun ;
8. And I will bring them back,
 That they may dwell in the midst of Jerusalem,
 And they shall become My people,
 And I will become their God,
 In truth and in righteousness.
9. Thus saith the Lord of hosts :
 Let your hands be strong,
 Ye that hear in these days
 These words from the mouth of the prophets,
 Which were spoken on the day when the founda-
 tion was laid
 Of the house of the Lord of hosts,
 The temple, in order to its being built.
10. For before those days
 There was no reward for man,
 Nor any reward for beast ;
 And to him that went out or came in
 There was no peace, because of the enemy :
 Yea, I sent all men each against another.

7.—The east and west are here put as parts for the whole. The meaning is, they would be delivered from every region whither they had been scattered.

8.—The words **בְּאֵמֶת וּבְצִדְקָה** belong to both members of the sentence, and express the reality and sincerity of the relation on both sides.

9.—The prophets here referred to were Haggai and Zechariah. See Ezra v., vv. 1, 2. The words which the people heard were those of consolation and encouragement.

10.—Such was the danger to which the Jews were exposed before the actual commencement of building the temple, that all intercourse between the city and the country was interrupted. The Samaritans pressed sore upon them, and annoyed them in every possible way. See Ezra iv., vv. 1-5.—By **צָר** is not meant *affliction* as the A.V., but the *enemy*. Comp. **צָרֵי יְהוּדָה וּבְנֵימִן**, *the enemies of Judah and Benjamin*, Ezra iv., v. 1.

11. But now I am no more as in former days,
To the residue of this people,
Saith the Lord of hosts.
12. For the seed shall be undisturbed,
The vine shall yield its fruit,
And the earth shall yield her produce,
And the heavens shall yield their dew,
And I will cause the residue of this people
To possess all these things.
13. And it shall come to pass,
As ye have been a curse among the nations,
O house of Judah, and house of Israel,
So I will deliver you,
And ye shall be a blessing :
Fear not ; let your hands be strong.
14. For thus saith the Lord of hosts :
As I purposed to afflict you,
When your fathers incensed Me,
Saith the Lord of hosts,
And I repented not ;
15. So again I have purposed, in these days,
To do good to Jerusalem and the house of Judah :
Fear ye not.
16. These are the things which ye shall do :
Speak truth one to another ;
Execute true and sound judgment in your gates.
17. And think not in your hearts of the injury
Which one hath done to another ;
And love not the false oath ;
For all these are things that I hate,
Saith the Lord.
18. And the word of the Lord was communicated
19. to me, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts :
The fast of the fourth, and the fast of the fifth,

19.—The fast of the *fourth* month was on account of the taking of Jerusalem, Jer. xxxix., v. 2 ; that of the *tenth* was in commemoration of the commencement of the siege, Jer. lii., v. 4. For the other two fasts see on chapter vii., vv. 3 and 5. The ׀ in יְהִי־נֶאֱמָר is adverbative, having the force of :—but in order that ye may enjoy the predicted and

- and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth [month], shall become joy and gladness to the house of Judah, even cheerful festivals ;
20. but love ye truth and peace. Thus saith the Lord of hosts :
- There shall yet come people,
And the inhabitants of many cities,
21. And the inhabitants of one shall go to another, saying,
Let us only go to pray before the Lord,
And to seek the Lord of hosts :
I too will likewise go.
22. Yea, many people and mighty nations
Shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem,
And to pray before the Lord.
23. Thus saith the Lord of hosts :
In those days ten men,
Out of all the nations,
Shall take hold, shall even take hold
Of the skirt of a Jew, saying,
Let us go with you ;
For we have heard that God is with you.

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promised blessing, see that ye be sincere before me, and live in harmony among yourselves.

20.—Several MSS. read רַבִּים, *many*, after עַמִּים, which in all probability existed originally in the text.

21.—The second אֶחָד, is equivalent to אֶחָדָה.

23.—*Ten* is put as a round number, or a definite for an indefinite, but indicating *many* rather than *few*.—מִכָּל לְשׁוֹנוֹת הַנּוֹיִם, *of all the languages of the nations*, means of all the nations speaking different languages.

## CHAPTER IX.

1. The announcement of the oracle of the Lord,  
Against the land of Hadrach,  
And Damascus his resting-place ;  
For towards the Lord is the eye of man,  
And of all the tribes of Israel.
2. Hamath also which is contiguous to it ;  
Tyre and Zidon, though it be very wise.
3. Yea, though Tyre hath built herself a fortress,  
And heaped up silver as dust,  
And fine gold as the mire of the streets ;
4. Behold, the Lord will dispossess her,  
And strike her wealth into the sea,  
And she herself shall be burned with fire.
5. Ashkelon shall see it and be afraid ;  
Gaza also, and shall be in great pain ;  
And Ekron, because her expectation hath made  
her ashamed ;  
The king shall vanish from Gaza,

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1.—*Hadrach*.—It is uncertain whether הדרח was intended to denote a country, a city, or a king. The last is most probable, on the ground that it is not likely that the name either of a country or its metropolis, in a region near Damascus, would have entirely disappeared from the pages of history.

2.—*Hamath* lay between Zobah and Rehob, and to the north of Damascus.—חמא, *Tyre*, was the most important of the two cities. The Tyrians, who had long been celebrated for their worldly wisdom (see Ezek. xxviii., vv. 3, 4, 5, 12, 17), gave a specimen of it on the approach of the Grecian monarch. On his intimating that he wished to offer sacrifice in the temple of Hercules, they replied that the ancient and true temple of that god was at Old Tyre on the continent, and sent him a crown of gold in testimony of their respect for so great a conqueror ; hoping by these means to induce him to pass on without visiting their island.

5.—It may easily be imagined what terror the news of the fall of Tyre must have struck into the inhabitants of the cities further along the coast southward, who knew the destination and route of the victorious army. *Ekron*, lying farthest north, is represented as reposing confidence in Tyre. While that city withstood the attack, she might expect Alexander to be arrested in his course. But when it fell, her hopes were gone.

- And Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.
6. And aliens shall dwell in Ashdod,
And I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.
7. I will remove his blood from his mouth,
And his abominations from between his teeth ;
And he, even he, shall be left for our God,
And shall be as a prince in Judah,
And Ekron shall be as a Jebusite.
8. And I will encamp about my house because of
the army,
Both when it passeth through, and when it re-
turneth ;
And no oppressor shall pass through them any
more,
For now do I look with mine eyes.
9. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion !
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem !
Behold, thy king will come unto thee,
Righteous and victorious is he,
Lowly, and riding upon an ass,
Even upon a colt, the foal of an ass.
10. And I will cut off chariots from Ephraim,
And horses from Jerusalem ;
The battle-bow shall also be cut off ;
And he shall speak peace to the nations ;
And his rule shall be from sea to sea,
And from the river to the ends of the earth.
11. As for thee also,
Because of the blood of thy covenant,
Do I send forth thy prisoners
Out of the pit wherein there is no water.
12. Return ye to the strong-hold,
Ye hopeful prisoners,

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7.—*His blood*.—The idolatrous rites of the Philistines shall cease.

8.—God promises to afford protection to the Jews, called as in  
Hoshea viii., v. 1, בֵּית־יְהוָה, *the house of the Lord*.

12.—*Stronghold*.—בְּצֻר occurs only in this place. It is derived  
from בָּצַר, *to cut off*, to prevent the approach of an enemy, to erect an

- Even to-day do I declare  
That I will recompense thee twofold.
13. For I have bent Judah for myself,  
Grasped Ephraim as a bow;  
And I will stir up thy sons, O Zion!  
Against thy sons, O Javan!  
And make thee as the sword of an hero.
14. And the Lord will appear on their behalf,  
And His arrows will go forth as lightning;  
Yea, the Lord God will blow the trumpet,  
And march in the storms of the south.
15. The Lord of hosts will protect them,  
And they shall devour,  
And tread down the sling-stones;  
They shall drink, they shall be noisy,  
As those who drink wine;  
They shall be full as the bowl,  
As the corners of the altar.
16. And the Lord their God will save His people,  
He will save them as sheep in that day;  
For as the stones of a crown,  
Will they elevate themselves over His land.
17. For how great is His goodness!  
And how great His beauty!  
Corn shall cause young men to thrive,  
And new wine the maidens.

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inaccessible fortification; hence the signification of the noun, *stronghold*, or *fortress*.

15.—כְּמוֹתֵיין, *like wine*, is elliptical for כְּמוֹתֵי שְׂתֵיין, *like those who drink wine*.—Several MSS., Kimchi and Abarbanel read וְהַכּוֹן.—*The bowl*.—Used to receive the blood of the sacrifices.—*The corners of the altar*.—On the horns of which the blood was sprinkled.

16.—כְּצִנּוֹן עִמּוֹ. These words are neither in construction, nor in apposition, but are to be separated so as to connect עִמּוֹ with רוֹשֵׁי, understood as repeated from the beginning of the verse.

17.—*To thrive*.—יִנּוּב, though occurring in the latter half, is common to both parts of the sentence. The root is נָבַח, *to sprout, germinate, grow up*.

CHAPTER X.

1. Ask ye from the Lord rain in the time of the harvest rain,
 From the Lord who maketh the lightnings,
 And giveth them showers of rain,
 To every herb in the field.
2. For the Teraphim spake vanity,
 And the diviners saw a lie;
 Those that saw dreams spake falsehood,
 They comforted in vain;
 Therefore they wandered as sheep;
 They were afflicted, because there was no shepherd.
3. My anger burned against the shepherds,
 And the he-goats I will punish—
 Nevertheless the Lord of hosts thinketh of His flock,
 the house of Judah,
 And maketh them as His splendid horse in war.
4. Out of him cometh forth the corner-stone,
 Out of him the peg,
 Out of him the battle-bow,
 Out of him each and every ruler.

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2.—The Teraphim, or household gods, appear to have had the form of the human body, and to have been consulted as oracles. See Hoshea iii., v. 4. The preterites and futures, which are intermixed, are all to be taken in the strictly past time.

3.—The verb פָּקַד is here used both in a good and a bad sense; followed by the preposition עַל, it signifies to *visit for evil, to punish*; governing the accusative, to *visit with good*. The “shepherds” and “he-goats” are used synonymously of the civil rulers.—In the middle of this verse is a sudden transition from the calamitous condition to which the Jews had been reduced, to that of prosperity and military prowess to which they were raised in the time of the Maccabees.

4.—*Out of him*.—קִמּוֹנִי thrice repeated, possesses much emphasis. The nominative is יְהוָה in the preceding verse.—By פִּנֵּה, *corner-stone*, is meant the prince or governor.—With us a *nail* would be an insignificant image, but יָתֵד, the Oriental nail, is a large peg in the inside of a room, wrought into the wall when the house is built, and on which is

5. And as heroes shall they trample the enemy  
In the mire of the streets in battle,  
They shall fight, for the Lord is with them,  
And put to shame the riders on horses.
6. I will strengthen the house of Judah,  
And save the house of Joseph,  
And bring them again in their own homes;  
For I have mercy upon them,  
And they shall be as if I had not cast them off;  
For I am the Lord their God,  
And I will answer them.
7. And Ephraim shall be as a hero,  
And their heart shall rejoice,  
As those who drink wine;  
Their sons shall see it and be glad;  
Their heart shall exult in the Lord.
8. I will whistle for them and gather them,  
For I have redeemed them;  
And they shall increase, as they once increased.
9. Though I have scattered them among the nations,  
Yet they shall remember Me in distant regions,  
And shall live with their children, and return.
10. I will bring them back from the land of Egypt,  
And gather them from Assyria;

hung all kinds of household stuff, together with the different implements of war.

6.—*Bring them again.*—הִרְשִׁיבוֹתֵי־ם, artificially compounded of הִשְׁבִּיבוֹתֵי־ם, the Hiphil of שָׁבַב, *to return*, and הִרְשִׁיבוֹתֵי־ם, the Hiphil of יָשַׁב, *to sit or dwell*, in order to express in *one word* both verbs as used by Jeremiah: הִרְשִׁיבוֹתֵי־ם אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְהִשְׁבִּיבוֹתֵי־ם לְבָתָּח, chapter xxxii., v. 37.

8.—*Whistle.*—The verb שָׁפַק signifies *to whistle*, or give a shrill sound, as those who keep bees do, who, by means of a whistle, or pipe, call them out from and back to their hives.

9.—The first two Vaus are employed antithetically, the former having the signification of *though or indeed*; the latter, that of *but or yet*.

10.—מֵאֵצְלָא has here the signification of there being *sufficient or enough*, as in Kal, Numb. xi., v. 22; Judg. xxi., v. 14; מְקוֹם, *room or place* understood.

And I will bring them to the land of Gilead and Lebanon,

And it shall not be sufficient for them.

11. And He will pass through the sea with distress,  
And smite the waves in the sea,  
And all the deeps of the river shall dry up;  
The pride of Assyria shall be brought down,  
And the sceptre of Egypt shall depart.
12. And I will strengthen them in the Lord,  
And in His name they shall walk,  
Saith the Lord.

## CHAPTER XI.

1. Open, O Lebanon! thy gates,  
That the fire may devour thy cedars.
2. Howl, cypress! for the cedar is fallen,  
Because the mighty are destroyed:  
Howl, ye oaks of Bashan!  
For the fortified forest hath come down.
3. There is the sound of the howling of the shepherds,  
Because their magnificence is destroyed;  
There is the sound of the roaring of young lions,  
Because the pride of Jordan is destroyed.
4. Thus saith the Lord my God,  
Feed the sheep of slaughter;  
Whom their buyers slay,  
And hold themselves guiltless;

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1.—Some interpret this verse literally of the locality so called; others understand it figuratively, but apply it either to Jerusalem, or to the whole land of Palestine. According to the Rabbinical interpretation (Babylonian Talmud, Yoma, fol. 39^b), it applies to the temple.

2.—The *cypress* was greatly inferior to the *cedar*, but was employed for the floors and ceilings of the temple. By יַעַר הַבְּצוּר, *the fortified or inaccessible forest*, is meant Jerusalem, the houses of which were numerous and close together as the trees of the forest, and round which the Jews had thrown up a wall of great strength.

4.—By צֹאן הַהֲרֹגָה, *the sheep of slaughter*, are meant the people devoted to destruction. Comp. מִצֵּן מְנִחָה, Ps. xliv., v. 23.

And whose sellers say,
 Blessed be the Lord, I am enriched ;
 And none of whose shepherds spareth them.

6. For I will no more spare the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord,

But behold ! I will deliver the men,
 Each into the hand of his neighbour,
 And into the hand of his king ;
 And they shall destroy the land,
 And I will not deliver them out of their hand.

7. And I fed the sheep of slaughter, truly miserable sheep ! And I took to myself two staves ; the one I called Mildness, and the other Concord,

8. and I fed the sheep. And I removed the three shepherds in one month ; and My soul loathed

9. them, and their soul also abhorred Me. So that I said :

I will not feed you ;
 That which is dying, let it die ;
 And that which is being cut off,
 Let it be cut off ;
 And as for the rest,
 Let them eat each the flesh of another.

10. I then took my staff Mildness, and cut it asunder, to annul my covenant which I had made with

11. all the tribes. And when it was annulled on that day, then the miserable sheep that gave

7.—*Truly miserable sheep*.—לֶבֶן עֲנִי הַצֹּאֵן has been variously rendered. Ewald : “ Wirklich die unglücklichsten Schafe ; ” Arnheim : “ Fürwahr die elendsten der Schafe.” The real difficulty lies in the word לֶבֶן. The lxx. have read it and the following word as one, לֶבֶן עֲנִי, and made *Canaanite* of it ! I think the ל is here redundant, as it is in many instances, and that we must construe עֲנִי as in verse 11, where it occurs without the ל. The words עֲנִי הַצֹּאֵן are the superlative of construction, as in רָעִי גוֹיִם, *the most wicked of nations*, Ezek. vii., v. 24, מִבְּחַר בְּרוֹשָׁיו, *the choicest of his cypresses*, Jer. xxxvii., v. 7.

8.—Who “ the three shepherds ” here definitely pointed out were, cannot be determined with certainty.

12. heed to me, knew of a truth that it was the word of the Lord. And I said unto them : If it be good in your eyes, give me my reward, and if not, forbear ; so they weighed my reward, thirty
13. pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it to the treasurer, the precious price at which I am prized at by them ; and I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them into the house of the Lord, unto the treasurer.
14. Then I cut asunder my second staff, Concord, to annul the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.
15. And the Lord said unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd ;
16. For, behold, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, Those which are perishing he will not visit, That which strayeth he will not seek, That which is wounded he will not heal, That which standeth he will not nourish ; But he will eat the flesh of the fat, And will break off their hoofs.

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12, 13.—As I stated in the preface, these verses are attributed by the Evangelist Matthew to *Jeremiah*. Jerome found an apocryphal book of Jeremiah (a portion of which still exists in the Codex Huntingtonianus 5,) where we read the following : “Jeremiah spake again to Pashur, Ye, and your fathers have resisted the truth, and your sons, which shall come after you, will commit more grievous sins than ye. For they will give the price of him that is valued, and do injury to him that maketh the sick whole, and forgiveth iniquity. And they will take thirty pieces of silver, the price which the children of Israel have given. They have given them for the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded. And thus it shall be spoken : The sentence of eternal punishment shall fall upon them, and upon their children because they have shed innocent blood.” Who does not perceive the clumsy attempt of one of the early Christians to justify the Evangelist Matthew by what was deemed a harmless fraud ?

16.—הַנִּכְרֹדֹת.—*Those that are perishing*, the Niphal partic. of כָּרַד, which in Niphal and Hiphil signifies *to cut off* or *be destroyed*. —נָעַר is not to be taken in the sense of *young*, as it is interpreted by Kimchi and Hitzig, since it is never so used, except with reference to human beings, but signifies *expulsion*, that which has been *cast out*, by implication, *strayed*, *wandered*.

17. Woe to the worthless shepherd that leaveth the flock !

The sword shall be upon his arm,  
And upon his right eye ;  
His arm shall utterly wither,  
And his right eye be completely blinded.

## CHAPTER XII.

1. The sentence of the word of the Lord concerning Israel ;

Saith the Lord, who stretcheth forth the heavens,  
Who layeth the foundations of the earth,  
And formeth the spirit of man within him.

2. Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of intoxication to all the people around ;

And also with Judah it shall be thus,  
In the siege of Jerusalem.

3. And it shall be in that day, I will make Jerusalem,

A burdensome stone to all people,  
All that lift it shall be cut in pieces :  
Yet all the nations of the earth  
Shall be gathered against it.

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2.—*A cup of intoxication.* סִפְרֵעֵל, another form for כּוּס הַחֲרָעֵלָה, Is. li., vv. 17, 22 ; by which is meant a cup filled with intoxicating liquors, causing those who drink it to *reel* and *stagger*, from רָעַל, *to shake, reel, stagger*.—The second part of the verse has occasioned no small perplexity to interpreters. The chief difficulty is created by the position of the preposition עַל, in the phrase וְנָם עַל־יְהוּדָה. The Targum, Kimchi, Hitzig, Ewald, and others suppose the meaning to be that the inhabitants of Judah would be compelled to join the enemies in the attack upon Jerusalem, and with them share in the punishment ; making סִפְרֵעֵל the nominative to יְהוּדָה. But this interpretation ill suits the context, in the whole of which Judah is represented as triumphant, and *not* as placed in the degrading position of auxiliaries in a war against its own capital. I consider the preposition to be here used for the purpose of conveying the idea of addition or accompaniment, so that, connecting Judah with Jerusalem, it represents the former, as well as the latter, as a cup of intoxication to the invaders. In support of this interpretation, see especially verse 6.

4. In that day, saith the Lord,
I will smite every horse with terror,
And his rider with madness;
But upon the house of Judah
I will keep my eyes open,
While I smite every horse of the people with
blindness.
5. And the chiefs of Judah shall say in their heart,
My strength is the inhabitants of Jerusalem,
Through the Lord of hosts their God.
6. In that day I will make the chiefs of Judah,
Like a fire pot among sticks of wood,
And like a torch of fire in a sheaf,
And they shall consume all the people around,
On the right hand and on the left;
For Jerusalem shall yet occupy her place in Jeru-
salem.
7. And the Lord will save the tents of Judah first,
In order that the splendour of the house of David,
And the splendour of the inhabitants of Jerusa-
lem,
May not be magnified above Judah.
8. In that day the Lord shall protect
The inhabitants of Jerusalem;
And the feeblest among them
Shall be on that day like David,
And the house of David
Shall be like divine beings,
Like an angel of the Lord before them.
9. And it shall be in that day,
I will seek to destroy all the nations
That come against Jerusalem.
10. And I will pour out upon the house of David,
And upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem,

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7.—*Jerusalem*, in the first instance, stands for *the inhabitants*.  
The lxx. and the Arabic omit the second altogether.

9.—*I will seek to destroy*.—אַבְרָקֵשׁ לְהַשְׁמִיד is spoken *more humano*,  
but conveys no idea of weakness in the speaker.

- A spirit of grace and of supplications,  
 And they shall look upon Me  
 Whom they have insulted;  
 And they shall lament for him  
 As one lamenteth for an only son,  
 And weep bitterly for him,  
 As one weepeth bitterly for a first-born.
11. In that day the lamentation will be great in Jerusalem,  
 As the lamentation of Hadad-rimmon  
 In the valley of Megiddon.
12. And the land shall lament, every family apart;  
 The family of the house of David apart,  
 And their wives apart;  
 The family of the house of Nathan apart,  
 And their wives apart;
13. The family of the house of Levi apart,  
 And their wives apart;  
 The family of Shimei apart,  
 And their wives apart;
14. All the families that are left,  
 Every family apart, and their wives apart.

## CHAPTER XIII.

1. In that day there shall be  
 A fountain opened to the house of David,  
 And to the inhabitants of Jerusalem,  
 For cleansing from sin and for purification.
2. And it shall be in that day,  
 Saith the Lord of hosts,  
 I will cut off the names of the idols from the land,  
 And they shall not be remembered any more;  
 And also the prophets and the unclean spirit will  
 I remove from the land.

10.—*Whom they have insulted.*—Like זָקַב and זָקַבְתָּ the verb זָקַר is to be taken in the metaphorical sense of *blaspheming* or *cursing*. Thus Rosenmüller, Eichhorn, Gesenius, de Wette, Winzer, Maurer and others.

3. So that should any one still prophesy,  
His father and his mother—his parents—  
Shall say to him, Thou shalt not live,  
For thou speakest falsehood in the name of the  
Lord;  
And his father and his mother—his parents—  
Shall thrust him through when he prophesieth.
4. And it shall be in that day,  
That the prophets shall be ashamed,  
Every one of his vision, when he prophesieth,  
And they shall not wear a hairy garment in order  
to deceive.
5. But he will say, I am not a prophet,  
I am a tiller of the ground;  
For I have been a slave from my youth.
6. And should it be said to him,  
What are these wounds between thy hands?  
Then he will say,  
Those with which I have been wounded in the  
house of my friends.
7. Awake, O sword! against My shepherd,  
And against the man whom I have associated  
with Myself,  
Saith the Lord of hosts:

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4, 5.—The hairy mantle, the garb of the ancient prophets, which is assumed in order to inspire the multitude with an impression of the superior sanctity of those by whom they are worn, shall be thrown aside as dangerous to appear in.—*I have been a slave.*—הִקְנֵנִי, lit., *one sold me as a slave*, but taken in connection with the following מִנְעֻרִי, *from my youth*, it signifies to be held in a state of slavery, to be a slave. The speaker declares that he had always been in a condition of life with which the exercise of the prophetic office was altogether incompatible.

6.—The false prophet, though he might rid himself of his idolatrous vestments, would not be able to efface the marks which had been made on his hands in honour of the idol which he served; yet as it was customary to cut and maim the body, especially the hand, in token of grief for departed relatives, he might hope to escape detection by attributing his scars to the latter cause.

7.—The prophecy contained in this and the following verses has no coherence with what immediately precedes, and was evidently delivered

- Smite the shepherd,
 And the sheep shall be scattered,
 But I will turn My hand upon the feeble ones.
8. And it shall be that in all the land,
 Saith the Lord :
 Two parts therein shall be cut off and expire,
 But the third part shall be left in it.
9. And I will cause the third part to go through the
 fire,
 And will refine them as silver is refined,
 And will try them as gold is tried ;
 They shall invoke My name,
 And I will answer them ;
 I will say, They are My people ;
 And they shall say, The Lord is my God.

CHAPTER XIV.

1. Behold ! a day is coming unto the Lord,
 When thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of
 thee.
2. And I will assemble all the nations
 Against Jerusalem to battle ;
 And the city shall be captured,
 And the houses plundered,
 And the women ravished ;
 And half the city shall go forth into exile,

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upon a different occasion. A new section, therefore, may be considered as commencing here, though it only extends to ch. xiv., v. 5.—*Whom I have associated.*—So Arnheim : “dem Manne, den ich mir zugestellt.”

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1.—By “the spoil of Jerusalem” is meant all that her inhabitants had accumulated. Notwithstanding all that was consumed by fire, the plunder obtained by the Romans was so great, that gold fell in Syria to half its former value.

2.—“All the nations” here means soldiers from all the different nations forming the Roman empire, which composed the army of Titus.

- But the rest of the people
Shall not be cut off from the city.
3. Then the Lord shall go forth,
And fight against those nations,
As in the day when He fought
In the day of battle.
4. And His feet shall stand in that day
On the mount of Olives,
Which is before Jerusalem on the east;
And the mount of Olives shall be split in its
midst,
Eastward and westward—
Causing a terrible shaking—
Half of the mountain shall recede towards the
north,
And half of it towards the south.
5. And ye shall flee from My shaking mountains;
For the cleft of the mountains shall reach unto
Azal;
Yea, ye shall flee as ye fled from the earthquake
In the days of Uzziah, king of Judah;
Then the Lord my God shall come,
And all the holy ones with Him.
6. And it shall be in that day
That there shall not be
The light of the precious orbs,
But thick darkness.

3.—The Roman power was doomed in its turn to destruction. Formidable as it might appear, God would overthrow it, as he had done the enemies of His people in former ages.

4.—*Causing a terrible shaking.*—גַּיָּא here is *not* valley; were it so, it should have been גַּרְזִיל גַּיָּא, as in Is. xl., v. 4, כָּל גַּיָּא יִנְשָׂא, *not* מִנְשָׂא. See the Babyl. Talmud, Berachoth 59^a, מֵאֵי זֵעוֹת ? גִּרְזֵא.

5.—*From My shaking mountains.*—Not *to*, as the A.V. and most translations.—*The clefts.*—Here גַּיָּא is masc., and means, therefore, *cleft*, *valley*, or the like.—*Azal.*—אֶצֶל was the proper name of a place, close to one of the gates on the east side of Jerusalem, to which the cleft or valley was to extend westward.—*With Him.*—Instead of עִמָּךְ, *with thee*, forty MSS. and all the versions read עִמּוֹ, *with him*.

7. But there shall be one particular day,
(Only known to the Lord,)
Neither day, nor night ;
At the time of the evening there shall be light.
8. And it shall be in that day
That living waters shall proceed from Jerusalem,
Half of them to the Eastern sea,
And half of them to the Western sea ;
In summer and winter shall it be.
9. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth ;
In that day the Lord shall be One,
And His name be One.
10. And all the land shall be changed
As it were into the plain from Geba to Rimmon,
South of Jerusalem ;
And she shall be exalted,
And be inhabited on her former site,
From the gate of Benjamin
To the place of the first gate,
To the gate of the corners ;
And from the tower of Chananel
To the king's wine-presses.
11. And men shall dwell in her,
And there shall be no more destruction ;
But Jerusalem shall dwell in safety.
12. And this shall be the plague
Wherewith the Lord will afflict all the people

7.—*One particular day.*—יֹם אֶחָד, a day altogether unique. Its peculiarity is to consist in the absence of the alternations of day and night. See *Shemoth Rabba*, ch. 18.

לַעֲתִיד לְבֹא הַלֵּילָה נַעֲשֶׂה יוֹם שְׁנֵאִמֵּר וְהִיא אוֹר הַלְּבָנָה כְּאוֹר
הַחֹמָה וְכוּ'

8.—מֵיִם חַיִּים, *living, i.e., running, refreshing, salubrious water*, in opposition to that which is stagnant.—*In summer.*—They shall neither be dried up by the heat of summer, nor congealed by the frost of winter.

10.—*Geba* was a Levitical city in the tribe of Benjamin, near to Gibeah, on the northern border of the kingdom of Judah.—*Rimmon* was a town in the tribe of Simeon, in the south of Palestine, and to be distinguished from the rock Rimmon, to the north-east of Michmash.

That shall fight against Jerusalem;
 Their flesh shall consume away
 While they stand upon their feet,
 And their eyes shall consume away in their sockets,
 And their tongue shall consume away in their
 mouth.

13. And it shall be in that day
 That there shall be great confusion from the Lord
 among them,
 So that each shall seize the hand of another,
 And his hand shall be raised against the hand of
 another;

14. And Judah also shall fight in Jerusalem,
 And the wealth of all the nations around shall be
 collected,

Gold, and silver, and garments, in great abundance.

15. And the plague of the horses,
 The mules, the camels, and the asses,
 And all the cattle which shall be in those camps,
 Shall be even as this plague.

16. And it shall come to pass
 That the whole residue of all the nations
 That have come up against Jerusalem,
 Shall go up from year to year,
 To worship the King, the Lord of hosts,
 And to celebrate the feast of tabernacles.

17. And it shall happen that those families of the earth
 Who go not up to Jerusalem,
 To worship the King, the Lord of hosts—
 Upon them there shall be no rain.

18. And if the family of Egypt
 Should not go up, and come not,
 Upon them also there shall be none;
 There shall be upon them the plague,
 Wherewith the Lord shall afflict the nations,
 That will not come up
 To celebrate the feast of tabernacles.

14.—*In Jerusalem.*—The Jews shall not only defend themselves at Jerusalem, but make a successful attack upon the enemy.

19. This shall be the punishment of Egypt,
And the punishment of all the nations
That will not come up
To celebrate the feast of tabernacles.
20. In that day there shall be
Even upon the bells of the horses
"Holy unto the Lord ;"
And the pots in the house of the Lord,
Shall be as the bowls of the altar.
21. And every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah,
Shall be holy to the Lord of hosts ;
And all those that sacrifice shall come
And take of them, and boil in them ;
And on that day there shall be no more any
trader
In the house of the Lord of hosts.



20.—*Upon the bells.*—The **מַצְלוֹת** were small metallic plates, suspended from the necks of horses and camels for the sake of ornament, and making a tinkling noise by striking against each other like cymbals. Root **צָלַץ**, to *tingle, tinkle*. These should be allowed to be made into vessels of the temple.—The *pots* were of *brass*, the *bowls* of *gold*. The former would be of the same material as the latter.

MALACHI.

INTRODUCTION.

Malachi is the last of all the Hebrew prophets, but we are left in profound ignorance respecting his personal history, and can only judge of the circumstances of his times from what is contained in his book. According to tradition, he lived after the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, and was contemporary with Nehemiah. This is fully borne out by the affinity of the book written by the prophet, with that written by the patriot. Both presuppose the temple to have already been built. The same condition of the Jews is described. They both condemn foreign marriages, and enforce the due payment of tithes, which had been neglected. They likewise correct abuses which had crept in with respect to the sacrifices, and reprove their countrymen for their want of sympathy with the poor.

In all probability, Malachi occupied the same place with respect to Nehemiah, which Haggai and Zechariah did with respect to Zerubbabel. That the former was assisted in the discharge of his duties by prophets, may be inferred from the charge brought against him by Sanballat, Neh. vi., v. 7. He may therefore be conceived of as having flourished somewhere about the year a.c. 420. His book is composed of a series of spirited castigations, in which the persons accused are introduced as repelling the charges, but thereby only affording occasion for a fuller exposure, and a more severe reproof of their conduct. Both priests and people are unsparingly reprimanded, and while they are threatened with Divine judgments, encouragement is held out to such as walked in the fear of the Lord.

Considering the late age in which he lived, the language of Malachi is pure; his style possesses much in common with the old prophets, but is distinguished more by its animation, than by its rhythmus or grandeur.

MALACHI.

CHAPTER I.

1. The sentence of the Lord's oracle to Israel by Malachi.
2. I have loved you, saith the Lord ;
Yet ye say, Wherein hast Thou loved us ?
Was not Esau brother to Jacob ?
Saith the Lord : yet I loved Jacob,
3. And Esau I hated,
And made his mountains a desolation,
And his heritage abodes of the desert.
4. Should Edom even say, We are impoverished,
But we will rebuild the ruined places :
Thus saith the Lord of hosts,
They may build, but I will overthrow ;
And men shall call them,
The territory of wickedness,
And, The people against whom the
Lord is indignant for ever.
5. And your eyes shall see it ;
And ye shall then say, The Lord will be
Magnified beyond the territory of Israel.

3.—*I hated*.—שָׂנֵאת, *to hate*, is here used in a comparative sense, qualifying the preceding verb אָהַב, *to love*. As the opposite of love is hatred, when there is only an inferior degree of the former exhibited, the object of it is regarded as being hated rather than loved.—תַּנּוֹת is considered by some to be the feminine of תַּנִּים, and is rendered *serpents, jackals*, or the like ; but it is preferable to adopt the derivation from the Arabic. By “abodes of the desert,” are meant deserted, ruined dwellings, such as are still found in great abundance in Idumea. The phrase is parallel to שְׂחָפָה in the preceding hemistich, and corresponds to the חֲרָבוֹת, *waste places, or ruins*, verse 4.

6. A son honoureth his father,
And a servant his master :
If then I be a father, where is my honour ?
And if I be a master, where is my fear ?
Saith the Lord of hosts to you, O priests,
That despise My name ; yet ye say,
Wherein have we despised Thy name ?
7. Ye offer polluted bread upon My altar :
Yet ye say, Wherein have we polluted Thee ?
In your saying, The table of the Lord is contemptible.
8. When ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil ?
And when ye offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil ?
Do but present it to thy governor,
Will he be pleased with thee,
Or receive thee with favour ? saith the Lord of hosts.
9. Now, then, I pray you, beseech the presence
Of God, that He may be gracious unto us ;
This hath been by your means ;
Will He receive one of you with favour ?
Saith the Lord of hosts.
10. Oh, that there were some one among you
That would lock up the doors,
That ye might not light up My altar for nought :

6.—Upon the fact of the respect usually shown by inferiors to their superiors, God has a right to expect that honour and reverence which corresponded to the high position which He occupied as Author and Moral Governor of the universe.

7.—*Polluted bread*.—That לֶחֶם is here to be taken in the sense of *animal flesh*, is obvious, from its being presented on the זֶבֶח, *altar of sacrifice*.

8.—Another *argumentum ad hominem*. The priests had the effrontery to present to God what they would not have cared to offer to their civil governor. To offer animals with any blemish was expressly prohibited in the law. Lev. xxii., vv. 22, 24 ; Deut. xv., v. 21.

10.—*Lock up the doors*.—Of the sanctuary.

- I have no pleasure in you,
 Saith the Lord of hosts,
 Neither will I accept in favour
 An offering from your hand.
11. For from the rising of the sun to its setting,
 My name is great among the nations;
 And in every place incense is offered
 Unto My name, and a pure offering;
 For great is My name among the nations,
 Saith the Lord of hosts.
12. But ye profane it by your saying,
 The table of the Lord is polluted,
 And by the assertion, Its food is contemptible.
13. Ye have also said, What a weariness!
 And ye have contemned it,
 Saith the Lord of hosts;
 And ye have brought what was robbed,
 And the lame, and the sick,
 And thus ye have brought an offering;
 Should I accept it in favour from your hand?
 saith the Lord.
14. But cursed be the deceiver,
 Who hath in his flock a male,
 And voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord that
 which is corrupt;
 For I am a great king,
 Saith the Lord of hosts,
 And My name is feared among the nations.

CHAPTER II.

1. And now, unto you is this charge,
 O ye priests!
2. If ye will not hearken, nor lay it to heart,
 To give glory unto My name,
 Saith the Lord of hosts,

2.—הַמְּאָרָה is emphatic, and doubtless has reference to Deut. xxvii., v. 15.—The fem. suffix in אֲרוֹתֶיהָ is to be taken distributively, with reference to the בְּרָכוֹת, *blessings*, immediately preceding.

- I will send a curse against you,
 And will curse your blessings,
 Yea, I will curse them singly,
 Because ye do not lay it to heart.
3. Behold ! I will destroy unto you the seed,
 And scatter dung upon your faces,
 The dung of your festive offerings ;
 And ye shall be taken away with it.
4. And ye shall thereby know
 That I have sent to you this charge,
 That My covenant might be with Levi,
 Saith the Lord of hosts.
5. My covenant of life and peace was with him,
 And I gave them to him,
 For the fear wherewith he feared Me,
 And the awe in which he stood of My name.
6. The law of truth was in his mouth ;
 No iniquity was found in his lips ;
 He walked with Me in peace and equity,
 And turned many from iniquity.
7. For the priest's lips should preserve knowledge,

3.—זָרַע, *seed*, is not to be changed into זָרַוּעַ, as some translators do, merely on the authority of the lxx.—אֵל in אֵלָיו has the signification of *with, together with*, as in Lament. iii., v. 41. Such usage, however, is rare.—נִשְׂאָה is to be taken impersonally.

4.—יָדַע, *to know*, has here the signification, *to know by experience*.

5.—In this and the following verses the prophet forcibly contrasts with the base and unworthy conduct of the priests, the noble character of their progenitor, with whom officially God had entered into covenant. The reference is to Phinehas, Numb. xxv., vv. 12, 13, where we have an account of this covenant, there called בְּרִיתִי שָׁלוֹם, *my covenant of peace*, and בְּרִית כְּהֹנָת עוֹלָם, *the covenant of an everlasting priesthood*. Both ideas are expressed in the present verse, and the meaning is, that the covenant was secured in perpetuity. Before הַחַיִּים וְהַשְׁלוֹם, the word בְּרִית is understood from the preceding.—מוֹרָה, *fear*, or *reverence*, is here the accusative absolute. נָחַת is the Niphal of חָתַת, *to be terrified, dismayed*. This verb is here purposely employed to express the extraordinary degree of profound and holy awe with which Phinehas was inspired when zealously vindicating the honour of God.

- And men should seek the law at his mouth,
For he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.
8. But, as for you, ye have departed from the way,
Ye have caused many to stumble in the law;
Ye have corrupted the covenant of the Levite,
Saith the Lord of hosts.
9. Therefore have I also rendered you contemptible
and base before all the people,
In the same measure as ye do not observe My
ways,
But act with partiality in the law.
10. Have we not all one Father?
Hath not one God created us?
Why then do we act unfaithfully one to another,
Profaning the covenant of our fathers?
11. Judah hath acted unfaithfully,
And an abominable thing hath been done in
Israel and in Jerusalem;
For Judah hath profaned the sanctuary of the
Lord which he loved,
And hath married the daughter of a strange god.
12. The Lord will cut off unto the man that doeth
this,
Son and grandson, from the tents of Jacob,

8.—The character of the priests whom Malachi was sent to reprove was the very reverse of that exhibited by Phinehas. Not only did they violate the law themselves, but, as is universally the case, induced others, by their bad example, to violate it likewise.

9.—**וְנִסְתָּוּ** is strikingly antithetical to **וְנִסְתָּוּ**, at the beginning of verse 8. The priests are here threatened with a retribution corresponding to their base and contemptible character, an additional and aggravating feature of which is added, viz., partiality in the decisions which they gave on points of law.

10.—That by **אִשָּׁה אֶחָדָה**, *one father*, we are to understand *God*, and not *Abraham* or *Jacob*, as some suppose, is determined by the force of the parallelism, in which we have the corresponding and elucidatory phrase **אֵל אֶחָד**, *one God*.

11.—*The daughter of a strange god*. An idolatress; a female addicted to the worship of a false deity.

12.—*Son and grandson*. Thus the Targum: **בֶּר וְבֶר וְבֶר**; also

And him that bringeth an offering unto the Lord of hosts.

13. And this ye have done a second time,
 Covering the altar of the Lord with tears,
 With weeping and groaning,
 So that there is no longer any regard paid to the offering,
 Nor is it favourably received at your hand.
14. Yet ye say, Wherefore ?
 Because the Lord hath been witness
 Between thee and the wife of thy youth ;
 To whom thou hast acted unfaithfully,
 Though she was thy companion,
 And thy covenanted wife.
15. And not one doeth so
 Who hath a remnant of a [good] spirit ;
 For what desireth such a one ?
 He seeketh a godly posterity ;
 Therefore take heed to your spirit,
 That none act unfaithfully
 To the wife of his youth.

Abarbanel, Sachs, Ewald, and others. The phrase is obviously, from its very form, like *נִין וְנֶכֶד עָצוּר וְעוֹבֵד*, proverbial.

13, 14.—Measures had been adopted to cure the evil in the time of Ezra, chap. ix., x. ; but they had relapsed into the same sin of marrying foreign wives in that of Nehemiah, and it is this latter which the prophet here reproves. Neh. xii., vv. 23-31. The crying and weeping were those of the Jewish wives who had been repudiated by their husbands. The phrase *אִשֶּׁת נַעֲרֶיךָ* *the wife of thy youth*, has reference to the early marriages among the Hebrews.

15.—Michaelis, Hitzig, Maurer, and others, concur in the opinion expressed in the Targum, that by *אֶחָד*, *one*, and *הָאֶחָד*, *the one*, Abraham is intended ; and maintain that what is here stated was designed to repel an objection raised by the priests, viz., that Abraham took an Egyptian female in addition to Sarah. The prophet, according to them, admits the fact, but denies the consequence, by showing that Abraham still retained the Spirit of God, because his object in contracting this alliance was to obtain the seed which God had promised him, and not to gratify carnal passion, to which the evil here condemned was to be traced.

16. For I hate divorce,
Saith the Lord, the God of Israel,
And him that covereth his garment with violence,
Saith the Lord of hosts;
Therefore take heed to your spirit,
And act not unfaithfully.
17. Ye have wearied the Lord with your words,
Yet ye say, Wherewith have we wearied Him?
By your saying, Every one that doeth evil
Is good in the eyes of the Lord,
And He delighteth in them:
Or else, Where is the God of Justice?

CHAPTER III.

1. Behold! I will send my messenger,
And he shall clear out the way before me,
And suddenly there will come to his temple
The Lord, whom ye seek;
And the messenger of the covenant,
In whom ye delight,
Behold! he is coming, saith the Lord of hosts.
2. But who can endure the day of his coming?
And who can stand when he appeareth?
For he is like the fire of the refiner,
And like the soap of the fullers;
3. And he will sit as a refiner
And purifier of silver;
He will purify the sons of Levi,
And refine them as gold and silver,
That they may offer unto the Lord,
An offering in righteousness.
4. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem
Be pleasing unto the Lord,

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16.—*I hate.* Instead of שִׂנְאָה I read שָׂנְאָה, with the personal pronoun אֲנִי understood. By לְבוֹשׁ *garment*, the wife is meant, who had the most glaring injustice done to her, by giving her a divorce, or by taking one or more in addition to her.

- As in the days of old,  
And as in former years.
5. But I will draw nigh unto you for judgment ;  
And I will be a swift witness  
Against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers,  
And against those that swear falsely,  
And against those who wrest the wages of the  
hireling,  
[Oppress] the widow and the fatherless,  
And do injustice to the stranger,  
And fear Me not, saith the Lord of hosts.
6. Because I am the Lord—I change not ;  
And ye sons of Jacob—  
Ye have not ceased to be.
7. Even from the days of your fathers  
Ye have departed from My statutes,  
And did not keep them ;  
Return unto Me, and I will return unto you,  
Saith the Lord of hosts ;  
But ye say, Wherewith shall we return ?
8. Can a man defraud God ?  
Yet ye have defrauded Me.  
But ye say, Wherein have we defrauded Thee ?  
In the tithes and the oblations.
9. Ye are cursed with the curse ;  
For ye—the whole nation—have defrauded Me.
10. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse,  
That there may be meat in My house,  
And try Me now herewith,

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5.—Malachi here returns to his own times, and threatens his ungodly contemporaries with divine judgment, speedily to be executed upon them. Magic greatly prevailed among the Jews after the captivity, as did also the other crimes here specified.—After וְנִשְׁבְּעִים, the phrase בְּנִשְׁבְּעִי is found in several MSS. and some early editions.

7.—The ל in לְמִיָּי is prosthetic, with somewhat of its temporal signification. There was still mercy in store for them, if they would only repent.

8.—*Defraud.*—קִבַּעַ, which occurs only in our prophet, and in Prov. xxii., v. 23, signifies *to cover, do anything covertly, defraud.*

- Saith the Lord of hosts,
 Whether I will not open for you the windows of
 heaven,
 And pour out a blessing for you,
 Till there shall be a superabundance.
11. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sake,
 And he shall not destroy the fruits of your
 ground;
 Neither shall your vine in the field be unfruitful,
 Saith the Lord of hosts.
12. And all the nations shall pronounce you happy,
 For ye shall be a delightful land,
 Saith the Lord of hosts.
13. Your words against Me have been strong,
 Saith the Lord;
 But ye say, What have we spoken against Thee?
14. Ye have said, It is vain to serve God;
 And what profit is it that we keep His ordinance,
 And that we walk contritely before the Lord of
 hosts?
15. For now we pronounce the proud happy;
 They also that work wickedness are built up;
 They even tempt God,
 Yet they are suffered to escape.

10.—עַד־בְּלִי־יָדַי, *usque ad defectum sufficientiæ*, i.e., not as Gesenius explains it, *till my abundance be exhausted*, which being impossible, the phrase is equivalent to *for ever, without end*; but where sufficiency can have no more place, more than sufficient—superabundantly.

11.—By the אֹכֵל *devourer*, noxious animals and insects are meant, especially the locusts. נִשְׁבַּל properly signifies *to cause abortion*, render childless, and, metaphorically, to make *barren* or *unfruitful*, when spoken of trees.

13-15.—קִיָּץ signifies *to bind fast, make firm*, and, in a bad sense, *to be hard, obstinate*, or the like.—נִפְתָּח is here used like נִפְתָּח in the bad sense of tempting or braving the Most High by presumptuous speeches and conduct. The walking contritely has reference to their going about in sackcloth and ashes, pretending to sorrow on account of their sins.—קִדְרָה, *to be dirty*, to go about in filthy garments, like persons who mourn, such being universally the custom in the East.

16. Then they that feared the Lord
 Conversed one with another;
 And the Lord hearkened, and heard,
 And a book of remembrance was written before
 Him,
 For those that feared the Lord,
 And those that respected His name.
17. And they shall be a peculiar treasure to me,
 Saith the Lord of hosts,
 In the day which I have appointed;
 And I will be kind to them,
 As a father is kind to his son who serveth him.
18. Then shall ye again perceive the difference
 Between the righteous and the wicked,
 Between him that serveth God,
 And him that serveth Him not.

16.—וְאֵם, then, specially marks the time in which the impious conversations were being held.—Here נִדְבָרֵי beautifully contrasts with the same term in the 13th verse. The verb is in Niphal, to express the reciprocal or conversational character of the language. As the ungodly did not confine their hard speeches to the mere utterance of them to such individuals as they might happen to meet, but made their infidel objections the subject of mutual discussion, so the pious are here represented as holding mutual converse respecting the interests of truth and godliness. It does not appear that Niphal ever has the frequentative signification, expressed in the A. V.

17.—סִגְלָה is to be construed with לִי וְהָיָה לִי, and עֵשָׂה is connected by means of אֲשֶׁר with יוֹם. The phrase עֵשָׂה יוֹם, to make a day, which occurs in verse 21, and in Ps. lxxviii., v. 24, means to fix, ordain, appoint, such a period for the execution of a special purpose.—סִגְלָה signifies private, special, or peculiar property. סָגַל, like the kindred root סָנַן, has the primary signification of shutting up, closing, and thus, secondarily, that of getting, or acquiring, what is shut up, in order to being carefully preserved. Hence the idea of what is peculiarly valuable or precious. The term is applied to the people of Israel, Exod. xix., v. 5; Deut. vii., v. 6; xiv., v. 2; xxvi., v. 18. It is used of the choice treasure of kings, etc., Eccles. ii., v. 8.

18.—שׁוּב is used idiomatically in connection with רָאָה to express the repetition of the action, the idea of which is conveyed by the latter verb. Notwithstanding the charge brought by the wicked against the providence of God, as if He treated all alike, the righteous had already had opportunities of perceiving, from observation and experience, that the position was false, viewed in application to the entire state and

19. For, behold ! the day cometh,
 Burning as an oven,
 And all the proud, and all that practise wicked-
 ness, shall be stubble,
 And the day that cometh shall burn them up,
 Saith the Lord of hosts,
 That it may not leave them either root or branch.
20. But unto you that fear My name,
 The sun of righteousness shall arise,
 With healing in his wings ;
 And ye shall go forth and leap as calves of the stall.
21. And ye shall tread down the wicked ;
 Surely they shall be ashes
 Under the soles of your feet,
 In the day which I have appointed,
 Saith the Lord of hosts.
22. Remember ye the law of Moses My servant,
 Whom I gave in charge in Horeb for all Israel,
 Statutes and ordinances.
23. Behold ! I send unto you Elijah the prophet,
 Before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.
24. And He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the
 children,
 And the heart of the children to the fathers :
 Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.
- [23. Behold ! I send unto you Elijah the prophet,
 Before the great and terrible day of the Lord
 come.]

circumstances of the different characters ; but they should have another and most convincing proof in the salvation of all who loved and feared God, and in the overthrow and destruction of His enemies.

19.—The phrase שִׁרְשׁ וְעֵנָף, *root or branch*, is proverbial, and signifies *any*, the least remnant. The Targum has בֶּר וְבֶר בֶּר, *son or son's son*.

20.—*And leap*.—פָּזַח, signifies *to spread, take a wide range*, and is used of the proud prancing of horses, and as here of the leaping and sporting of calves. The simile is designed to convey the idea of freedom from outward restraint, and the enjoyment of self-conscious hilarity.